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By WM. F. ROBISON, S. J.

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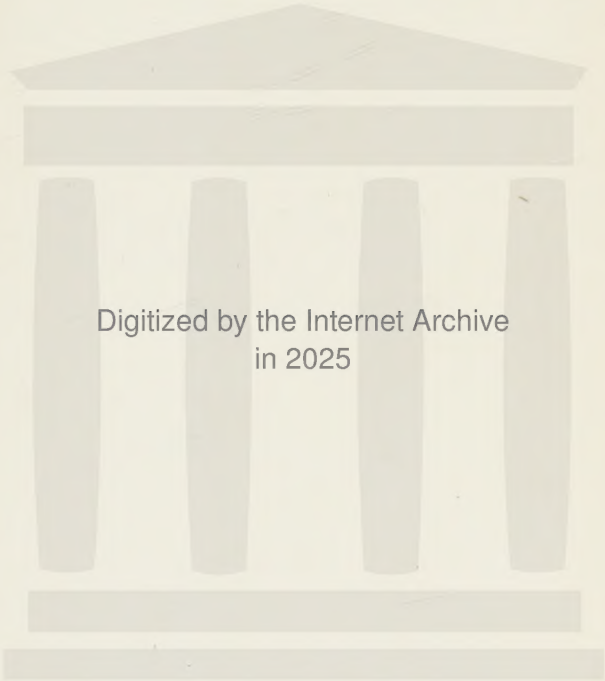

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CHRIST'S MASTERPIECE

A Study of the One True Church

St. Albert's College Library

BY

WILLIAM F. ROBISON, S.J.
Professor of Theology, St. Louis University

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TO
MY MOTHER

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FOREWORD

For many years St. Francis Xavier (College) Church has been accustomed to help towards the sanctification of the Lenten season by a series of lectures on doctrinal subjects. Two years ago I decided, as the appointed lecturer, to enter the field of apologetics and to take up the study of the foundations of our Christian faith. The lack of clear-cut and definite knowledge of some of our Catholic people and the misty notions about religion so common outside of the Church were reasons enough for the choice of such a subject.

Accordingly in the series of two years ago I treated of *Christ's Masterpiece,* and studied Catholicity, as being Christianity in the concrete. Last year, going back a step, I examined the grounds of our faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ, which is really the tap-root of the fair tree of Christian reve-

lation; and in the Lent just past I took up the reasons for the necessity of religion in general. The conclusion of this necessarily short, but fairly comprehensive view of apologetics seems a fitting time to yield to the advice and urgings of those whose opinion I value, and to publish the lectures with a view to wider and deeper good.

It is hardly needful for me to say that I make no claim to any striking originality in this presentment of Catholic truth. The saying, "novelty is the sign of error," might well warn any one from even the attempt to depart too much from the beaten path. The ordinary theological treatises have furnished the substratum of thought, and special works, like the *Dictionnaire Apologétique* of A. d'Ales, have been laid under contribution.

I have deemed it best to print the discourses just as they were given. Some advantage might have resulted from a recasting; but the process might also have taken away from the directness and force of the form of the spoken word. Besides, in the present shape the lectures have the ad-

vantage of having been "tried out" with no little resultant good; and I have thought it unwise to forego a sure advantage for a problematical improvement.

In giving this work of zeal and love to the public I am convinced that the doctrine is true and solid; I hope that it is put forward with clearness and strength; and I pray that it may be of help both to those who are of the household of the faith, and to those earnest and sincere inquirers outside of her blessed fold, who are following after the "Kindly Light."

WILLIAM F. ROBISON, S.J.

St. Louis University,
Easter, 1918.

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CHRIST'S MASTERPIECE

LECTURE I

THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

Special importance of apologetics: repels attacks: leads to truth. Three parts in knowledge of foundations. Scope of present inquiry. Christ the King. Gradual revelation of person and mission. Perfection of manhood: contrast with saints. Legate of God. Very God. The Kingdom. Meaning. God's dispensation with Israel. Description of Kingdom. Correction of false views of Jews: refutation of later misconceptions.

The holy season of Lent is preeminently a season of penance and prayer; a time of atonement for the evil of our lives and of preparation for more godly living in the days to come; a period of heartfelt pleadings with God for strength to be stronger than our weakness. Penance and prayer tear away the mask of pretence or hypocrisy from our souls, and place us in the presence of God in the naked reality of our littleness.

As a consequence we are in a more serious frame of mind; we are dragged away from the frivolity of the reckless world. In this sobriety of spirit we are much better disposed to see the splendid light of the great doctrinal truths, which shine through the darkness of the world's ignorance; with God's grace we are more ready to follow whither the light leads,—and that is always to the feet of our great and loving Lord. It is for this reason, I take it, that instructions and sermons are multiplied during this sacred time: it is for this reason that we are to enter upon this course of Lenten Lectures, which will have to do with doctrinal subjects.

One of the most important matters of consideration for all at this time of such clashing claims on religious matters is the position of the Catholic Church in the world and her demands upon the conscience of all mankind. In view of this it is my purpose during the present course of lectures to treat of that Church of Christ, of her right to our allegiance, of the reasons of her mighty powers. The Church asks much of her children,—unrestricted loyalty, absolute and

irrevocable assent in matters of divine faith, unhesitating and loving obedience in matters of discipline; but she asks no more than Christ commissioned her to ask. It will, therefore, be especially useful to examine the grounds of her claims to our submission and allegiance.

I say, especially useful; and there is reason for the word. Time was when the battle against truth was waged with regard to some particular point of divine revelation; but today the battle has gone further back, as the very foundations of divine faith are assailed. Now it is not so much a question as to whether God revealed this or that truth, as whether there is such a thing as revelation at all or any such thing as an authorized guardian and interpreter of that revelation; nay, with some the question is whether there is any God who can make a revelation. It is the foundations of faith that are assailed; and there we must turn our defense.

Nay, even without reference to attack and defense thinking men and women should be able to render an account of the faith that is in them: they may well broaden and

deepen and strengthen the intellectual foundations on which their faith is based. And in their efforts in this direction the conditions for grasping the truth and holding it are the will to believe, which is the hunger and thirst after justice, and deep humility, which is the way fixed by God, who knows the weakness of our tottering steps.

Our purpose in the consideration of the grounds of faith is not to reexamine whether the assent of faith has been well given (that would be disloyalty); but to see more clearly how reasonably it has been given. When we see this in all its evidence, there will be no danger of half-sincerity in the profession of faith; before the sarcastic attacks of sneering opponents one's faith will not fail merely because he has never taken stock of the reasonable foundations of his supernatural assent to divine revelation. If he had done so, he would see that the act of faith is so far from being the dethronement of reason, that it is its highest and most glorious exercise: he would see that the most irrational of all men are those who call themselves rationalists: he would be able to de-

fend his faith against those who attack it through ignorance or malice: he would be able to stretch forth a helping hand to those who are groping in the darkness, and would lead them on to the home of peace and light in the abode of God with men.

The three main questions answered by this fundamental knowledge of the grounds of faith are these: first, is there a God? and can He speak to men? Secondly, has He done so? In particular, is Jesus Christ the approved messenger of God? Was the Apostle right when he said: "God who in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son"?[1] In other words, was Jesus of Nazareth the accredited legate of God, nay, was He in very truth God as well as man? And thirdly, the first two points being firmly established, did Christ commit the safeguard of His revelation and of His religion to a Church with powers fixed by Himself? What and where is that Church?

During the present course of lectures it is

[1] Heb. I, 1, 2.

not my purpose to dwell at length upon the first two points: these will form the subjects of later courses of lectures, if God so wills. For the present we shall take them for granted; and we need not fear, for they are as firm as the eternal hills. The existence of God is proved beyond the reach of cavil by the unanswerable arguments drawn from the existence of the visible world with its life and motion; by the manifest design in the vast universe, which demands a wise and powerful Creator; by the voice of conscience (so many think), speaking with irresistible authority, and leading the mind up to the knowledge of the author of all law; by the universal, and hence infallible, conviction of all mankind as to the existence of a Supreme Being.

The ambassadorship of Christ and His divinity too are proved by His sanctity, His doctrine, His miracles, His prophecies, His resurrection; by the testimony of the Father and the Holy Spirit; by the teaching of the Apostles confirmed from on high; by the fact of the miraculous spread of His religion, and by the declaration of His Church, proved

infallible by reasons other than His own promise. Tonight by way of preparation for what is to follow I shall touch upon the legacy and divinity of Christ, as shown forth in the gospel records, which have for their genuineness and accuracy such strong grounds that to reject them is to reject all possibility of historical knowledge and all hope of scientific learning. But chiefly during this course I shall consider with you the third point, namely, whether Christ established a Church with certain fixed powers for the guardianship of His revelation and His blessed religion: then we shall study what those powers are, and where they are to be found. As a beginning of this work, which I hope may be full of profit for you and others whom you may influence, let us think upon the King and His Kingdom.

And first let us dwell for a while upon the thought of the King, Christ Jesus. For King He was. The angel, who brought to the little maid of Nazareth the tidings of His coming birth, had said that He would sit upon the throne of David His father and of

His kingdom there would be no end.[1] He Himself claimed the majesty of a king, though not of a king of earth. No king of earth was He; for when, after the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, His enthusiastic admirers would have taken Him and made Him king, He fled away into the mountain alone. Yet king He was. As He faced the might of Rome in the person of Pilate He had said: "I am a king; but now my kingdom is not from hence."[2] He was the king of truth and love and holiness: and it was more than the irony of Pilate's beaten pride that spoke from the tablet of the cross and through the lurid light of angry skies showed in letters of red against a white background the words, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."[3] Yes, He was the King of the Jews, the King of the Gentiles, the King of the world.

Gradually and with a view to the ways of prudence in the face of relentless foes He made His revelation about His Kingdom and His own kingly character. Before these

[1] Luke I, 32.
[2] John XVIII, 37, 36.
[3] John XIX, 19.

foes of His He mingled lights and shadows: He showed forth divine truths in such sort that the ill-disposed were astounded rather than touched, disconcerted and silenced rather than swept within the embrace of the love they scorned. But if only they would not harden their hearts, the light was there to lead them on to the docility of disciples. To the intimate circle of His own, especially the Twelve, He made known more clearly the mysteries of the Kingdom and the qualities of the King. But before both friend and foe the light was growing up to the time of the heavenly revelation made to Simon Peter that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God".[1] And at the end at the official interrogation of the highest religious authority of the land and with death leering at Him from behind the faces of His hypocritical judges, He spoke to all the world without any veiling of the truth His mission and His title of Messiah, King of God's people. Christ the King! King He was, and glorious as man, as the legate of God, as more than all this and as very God.

[1] Matt. XVI, 16, 17.

As man He was the paragon of the race, the perfect one of mankind. With the exception of the few blinded fools, who have tried to foist on the world the senseless myth that Christ never existed, most men, even of those who refuse to recognize the real reason of His supreme excellence, admit Him to be the pride of the race, the holiest, most lovable, most sacred of the sons of men. Yes, the rationalists and even the scoffers admit all this. From Renan to Harnack there is an undivided testimony that never did man speak as this man spoke, that He preached a morality, beside which the systems of all the philosophers of the world are weak and all but meaningless. He stood for the majesty of God as never man stood before: He demanded that one should render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, but to God the things that are God's,—not to the God of the philosophers, but to the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, to the living God, to the perfect God, the merciful God, the loving God, to the God who spurns the foolish service of empty formalities and looks to the heart within, to the God to whom He taught us to

pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven".[1]

Always there was the closest union between Himself and the Father in heaven. Yet there's a strange difference between Christ and the highest of the saints. Between God and man, as between the spirit and the flesh, there is a lack of proportion,—almost a conflict. Judaism had sensed the disparity: higher light was only to throw out in clearer relief the abyss between the divine and the human. It is truly an abyss. The higher life of mystics, who are united to God through the unrestricted lowering of self, commences with the annihilation of the human before the majesty of the divine. In the presence of God the desire of the heart and soul of God's dear ones is for purification and spiritualization: nature must be brought to its original nothingness before the overpowering splendor of the Eternal. But in the Christ we see none of this. He is at home, where the highest of the saints were abashed: He is on familiar ground, where Moses must take off his shoes because the ground on which he trod was holy: He

[1] Matt. VI, 9.

is at rest, where in later days a Catherine of Siena and a Stanislaus Kostka were crushed.

The Christ did not feel the majesty of the divine presence less; but He was at home on the sublime heights of union with God. Penitent? No: He had no need for penance. After the first fast of forty days as a preparation for His public mission He does no penance up to the crazing chaos of His passion. He denounces sin with the full consciousness that He is not touched by it. He is a stranger to evil, to regret, to remorse. Others he exhorts to repentance; He loves. Others he urges to seek; He has attained. In Him we find the union of confidence with reverence the most profound; of a tender familiarity towards God, which needs no pardon, with the clearest view of the evil of sin and of the demands of divine justice; of an unshakable security with the deepest sense of what is due to God from man who is His creature.

Man He is, true and complete; man of His time and of His race, aglow with passionate longings, of which He refuses to have

part only in the meanness and littleness. In the midst of the wildest attacks and the most unsettling enthusiasms He is always master of Himself with a transparency of soul like that of the limpid stream, which flows along in clearness and brightness, mirroring the blue sky above. Even when He speaks of things beyond human ken, He is always Himself. He may tell of seeing Satan fall like lightning from the heavens: He is undisturbed. He may grow indignant over His foes' blind absorption in the things of earth and their worldly views about the Kingdom of God: His self-control never falters. With the anger of the Lion of the tribe of Juda burning in His eyes He may drive the buyers and sellers from the temple of God: He ever maintains His poise. He may reproach Peter for opposing the coming of sorrow; He may rebuke the "sons of thunder" for their indiscreet zeal: He never loses Himself.

Yes, even as man Christ went beyond the possibility of anyone ever surpassing Him. As I said before, even from those who refuse to see in Him anything superhuman, His

grandeur of soul has forced expressions of regard that declare Him the hero of humanity. He was that to the scoffer Renan: He is that to Harnack, the most noted of the religious rationalists of today. The Berlin professor recognizes in Jesus of Nazareth no more than a mere man, but a man who is the wonder of the ages. He says of Him: "He lived in religion, and it was the breath to him in the fear of God; his whole life, all his thoughts and feelings, were absorbed in the relation to God. . . . He remained kind and sympathetic to every living thing. . . . He is possessed of a quiet, uniform, collected demeanor, with everything directed to one goal. . . . Entrusted with the greatest of all missions, his eye and ear are open to every impression of the life around him,—a proof of intense calm and absolute certainty. . . . His was an inner freedom and a cheerfulness of soul in the midst of the greatest strain, such as no prophet ever possessed before him. . . . He who had not where to lay his head does not speak like one who has broken with everything, or like a heroic penitent, or like an ecstatic prophet, but like a

man who has rest and peace for his soul, and is able to give life and strength to others. He strikes the mightiest notes; he offers men an inexorable alternative; he leaves them no escape; and yet the strongest emotion seems to come naturally to him, and he expresses it as something natural; he clothes it in the language in which a mother speaks to her child".[1] Truly indeed might men say of Christ, as they did: "Never did man speak like this man";[2] and they might have added: "Never did man live as this man lives; never did man love as this man loves". He was in all truth the perfection of humanity.

And He had His mission to mankind; for He was the ambassador of God to men. The Father had sent Him, even as He with all power given to Him in heaven and on earth would send His own to continue His work. Yes, He was sent,—and He sought not His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him; nay, His very food was to do the will of the heavenly Father. He came that men might have life and might have it more abund-

[1] Harnack. *What is Christianity?* pp. 36–38 English trans.
[2] John VII, 46.

antly; He came to save that which was lost, to lead back the sheep that had wandered, to gather the sheep that were not of the fold, but must be brought to the flock, until there should be but one fold and one shepherd. He was the Good Shepherd. He was the gate as well: to pass through Him was salvation and life; to seek to enter the fold except through Him was an act of brigandage. He was to bring holiness and salvation to all by the means which He determined: He was to continue the application of His redemption through the channels which He Himself would fix. In a word, He was not merely *a* means of spiritual progress and of religious enlightenment; He was *the* Mediator, one and necessary, between God and man; He was not only *a* way to heaven, but *the* Way: He not only led to life; He was *the* Life and gave it to men. Of a truth He had a mission; He was God's legate. Yet great as was His mission, confirmed from heaven, He was greater than His mission; for He was very God.

The full grandeur of Christ's revelation is grasped only by him, who holds to the

divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. Even Sabatier (later fallen like so many others from the integrity of truth) realized that the fulness of Christ's mission includes the truth of His divinity; for he said: "Is Jesus only a man? Then, no matter how great we make him, Christianity loses its character of absolute truth and becomes a philosophy. If Jesus is the Son of God, Christianity remains a revelation".[1]

Now the very same unshakable arguments, which establish the ambassadorship of Christ and which all but the most blinded must admit, prove His divinity. By the proofs, to which I referred in the beginning, but which it is not within the scope of our present purpose to develop,—among others, by His sanctity, His doctrine, His miracles one and all, but especially by His resurrection from the dead, by the moral miracle of the spread of His religion, He demonstrated the fact that He was what He claimed to be. Now, He claimed that He was more than man, more than a legate of God; He claimed that He was very God.

[1] Quoted by Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*.

Look at the gospel record. The Law was the object of a veneration, which in Christ's time had verged into a superstition that would have subjected even Jahve Himself to the Thora. Even in the day of its declaration to men Moses, the mouthpiece of the divine Lawgiver, was subject to the Law. But Christ puts Himself above the Law.[1] He reads the secret thoughts of men; He forgives their sins by an independent power, and proves by miracle His right to this power of remission.[2] He claims for Himself preexistence before this mortal life,[3] preexistence in the unity of God, for He and the Father are one.[4] He demands from men absolute allegiance to Himself, and a love that goes beyond the love for father and mother and those nearest and dearest.[5] To be persecuted for Him is to be persecuted for justice; to render testimony to Him is to render testimony to truth.[6] Blessed the

[1] Matt. V, 21, 27, 31, 38.
[2] Matt. IX, 2 ff.
[3] John VIII, 56.
[4] John X, 30.
[5] Luke XIV, 26, 27.
[6] Matt. V, 11 ff.

man who shall suffer in His service: woe betide him, who shall deny Him; for he shall be rejected by the sovereign and incorruptible Judge, who can destroy body and soul into hell.[1] The least of His disciples shall be greater than the greatest of the Old Dispensation.[2] He is greater than the Temple and the Law of the Sabbath, greater than the prophets;[3] yea, He is the Christ the Son of the Living God,[4] the indispensable Mediator between God and man, the Judge who will pronounce judgment on all men according to their relations with Himself.[5] He makes promises, which God alone could redeem: He demands for Himself what God alone has a right to exact. Wise and good and lovable and accessible as He is, He is all ours in one part of His life, consubstantial with our humanity: and on the other hand He is all divine, the worthy object of our unconditioned homage of adoration,—very God.

1 Matt. X, 22, 28.
2 Matt. XI, 2–11.
3 Matt. XII, 6; XIII, 16–18.
4 Matt. XVI, 16.
5 cf. Luke VII, 36 ff.

Such is the King. He is all this to us: He must be all this to everyone, who will not turn his back upon the evidence of His right to be what He claimed to be. He is King, human and divine, "and of His kingdom there shall be no end." [1]

And His Kingdom? "The Kingdom of God" or "the Kingdom of heaven" or simply "the Kingdom" (they are all the same thing) was the great subject of the preaching of the Master and of the Apostles; and because of the ministry of Christ that Kingdom was at hand and in the very midst of men. The Kingdom? It meant the sway and domination of God in the souls of men; but that sway by faith and love and grace was wrapped up in the workings of the exterior organization which Christ instituted. The Kingdom of God is practically identified with the Church and its effects. Christ called His Kingdom His Church, which all must hear under penalty of being classed with the heathen and the publican.[2] He would build His Church on Peter, and would give to him the keys

[1] Luke I, 33. [2] Matt. XVIII, 17.

of this Kingdom of heaven in its earthly stage.[1] The days would go on amid trials and sufferings and triumphs and glories; and after all this would come the day, of which Paul said: "Afterwards the end: when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God and the Father, when He shall have brought to naught all principality and power and virtue. For He must reign".[2] That would be the glorious stage of the Kingdom of God in the bliss of heaven, the transformation of the Church militant into the Church triumphant.

Christ was much more than the founder of a school, much more than the exploiter of a form of doctrine: He was the inaugurator of a kingdom. Not by the wildest flights of imagination could the work of a Plato, a Pythagoras, a Socrates have been called the founding of a kingdom. But Christ's chief work, after the accomplishment of the atonement of His overwhelming redemption, was to inaugurate the Kingdom of God, that would know no end.

1 Matt. XVI, 18, 19.
2 I. Cor. XV, 24, 25.

"The Kingdom of God" or "the Kingdom of heaven" was a notion revealed by God and well known to the people with whom Christ lived; it had come down to them from ages long past. The covenant of the Most High with Abraham and with Israel had made this race the chosen people, "the spouse of God," and had centred in it the religious destiny of the world. In spite of the adulterous infidelities of the chosen spouse God would show mercy, and through Israel Jahve would reign and His lordship would be acknowledged by all mankind. By right His glory extended as far as His sovereign dominion; but in fact too the day would come, when His majesty would be confessed by all the world. Yes, Jahve would have His day; and Israel, the instrument of His glorification, would forever be exalted with His glory. And the one who was to bring about this glory, was the Messiah, the one who was to be sent, the anointed of God, the Christ. That was the revelation of God.

The prophets did not see all that was in the purpose of God; yet at times they glimpsed the purpose of the Eternal. Espe-

cially Isaias, as he foretold the ways of the "Servant of Jahve," "the Man of Sorrows," was portraying the real outlines of the "Chosen One of God." But the people with their masters would not see the truth of God: they disfigured the correct idea of the Kingdom and of the King. According to their notion Israel was to sway the world in all the might of earthly power, before which the lords of the world would crouch and cringe in trembling subjection. The glorification of God's people would come with worldly magnificence amid portentous manifestations, bordering upon the weird and the theatrical, and the splendors of the rejuvenated world would rival the chimerical imaginings of the "golden age."

As He so often declared, Christ came to fulfill the promise of the Kingdom of God. He taught how false was the carnal, worldly, material concept of the Kingdom, entertained by His contemporaries: but it *was* the expected "Kingdom of heaven" that He came to inaugurate.

In the temptation of Christ at the very outset of His public life there was a clear

attempt to draw Him into the egotistic, carnal, marvelous notion of the Kingdom; and the attempt was made by the great antagonist, "the enemy," the leader of that other kingdom,[1] which was drawn up in battle array against the Lord and against His Christ. Satan had his kingdom with his minions faced against the King of the Kingdom of God. Not only was the power of the Christ over His infernal adversaries a mark of the advent of the Kingdom;[2] but the establishment of the Kingdom was like a gigantic duel, a frightful conflict to the death and without quarter, wherein the wicked one would be conquered, his pretended rights crushed, his power broken and himself put to endless rout. "When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are in peace which he possesseth. But if a stronger than he come upon him, he will take away his armor in which he trusted and will distribute the spoils."[3] Satan was the strong one; but Christ was the stronger

[1] Matt. XII, 26.
[2] Luke XI, 20.
[3] Luke XI, 21, 22.

one who would overcome him: and the fight between the leaders meant the fight between their kingdoms and their followers. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth." [1]

As Christ fought the powers of evil, He was making provision for the continuance of the struggle after He Himself would have won the glorious victory on the hillside of Calvary, and for the application of the fruits of victory after He had gone to the glory of His triumph. Gradually and more explicitly He taught the true nature of the Kingdom, and by His teaching prepared an antidote against the poison of false doctrine, whether of the Jews who rejected Him and His mission or of others in the days to come, who would misconceive the character of the work that the Father had given Him to do.

He corrected the false notion of the Jews. Far from being magnificent in its advent and its manifestation the Kingdom was to begin humbly and without drawing to itself the notice of the thoughtless and careless: it would not make its appeal to the sword or to

[1] Luke XI, 23.

prodigies.[1] In its origin it would be like the grain of mustard seed, almost imperceptible in its smallness. Grow indeed it would, until it would become a great tree, in which the birds of the air might build their nests; but its very growth would be slow and gradual; nay, it would be almost as unnoticed as the action of the yeast within a mass of flour.[2] In the Kingdom of Christ the limitations of race and blood were abolished once and forever: His Kingdom was to be not merely Jewish; it was to be world-wide.

And as for the glory of the King, it would not be the glory of this world. His glory would be won through the pangs of humiliation: His triumph would be measured by the magnitude of His failure. For not only after the resurrection did the Master say to His own: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into His glory?"; [3] but before the end of His mortal life He told them over and over again with repeated insistence and in spite of their failure to understand (or perhaps because

[1] Luke XVII, 20.
[2] Matt. XIII, 31 ff.; Mark IV, 26 ff.; Matt. XIII, 33 ff.
[3] Luke XXIV, 26.

of it), that the Son of Man would be derided and spat upon and scourged and crucified,—and on the third day He would rise again. His way to glory was the path of ignominy; His throne of everlasting sway would be the blood-stained cross of the executed malefactor. Truly, Christ corrected the false notion of the Kingdom, held by the Jews of His day,—a Kingdom carnal, worldly, material, splendid with the trappings of earthly pomp.

And the blessed Master also condemned in advance the wild vagaries of later years,—and first, the fantastic theory of men like Loisy. Alas for him! Once he stood at the altar of God and with his priestly lips called the Son of God down from heaven: later he forgot the splendor of the Savior of the world and made of Christ a fool, who lived in the midst of chimerical dreams, hesitant, bloodless, a gentle maniac who went the way of weak humanity, died for a wild vision, was cast into the ditch and rotted and was no more. According to the wise (?) ones of this school of Loisy's the Kingdom preached by the Christ was to come only when the impending overturning of earthly things

would have introduced Israel's hope and the sway of God. These critics, glorying in their own enlightenment, tear apart the Christ, as they dissect the gospels and reject whatever does not accord with their preconceived opinions.

They misrepresent Christ's teaching. The Master did indeed tell of the splendid, heavenly glory of His Kingdom which was unto everlasting and which would reach its crowning perfection at the glorious advent of His last coming.[1] But He did not say when that glorious advent was to have place. That time was not to be made known, and meanwhile all were to watch and pray and be ever ready.[2] Yet before that celestial period of His Kingdom there was to be a stage adapted to the conditions of this world of ours. During this time there were to be within that Kingdom the good and the bad, the wise and the foolish; and wheat and the cockle were to grow together up to the day of consummation.[3] There was to be a pe-

[1] Matt. XXV, 31 ff.
[2] Mark XIII, 32, 33.
[3] Matt. XIII, 24–43.

riod of slow progress of the gospel's spread,[1] of trials and persecutions,[2] of the acquiring of merit,[3]—all of which are incompatible with the notion of a Kingdom exclusively heavenly.

Far from merely preaching a doctrine of absolute unconcern for the things of this world, Christ, as we shall see more clearly later on, made provision for the continuance of His work and left behind Him a Church, which was His Kingdom, to do until the end of time the things that He had begun. In a word, His Kingdom was to have its final and complete glory only when He would come again at the end of time to judge the living and the dead; but there was to be a preparatory period of whose duration He would give no information. Yet for all that He did give sufficient indications of its long continuance, during which it was to bring the souls of men to Himself and to the Father.

And it was to bring them to God not as

[1] Matt. XIII, 32 ff.
[2] Matt. V, 10–12.
[3] Matt. XVI, 24–27.

isolated units, but as a collective, united organization. His Kingdom was not altogether spiritual and interior. It was that in a supreme degree: the mere conning of the words of the Master in His "Sermon on the Mount" shows that. There He proclaims blessed those whom the world esteems the most wretched of men: He urges His followers to sublime and sacred holiness, to a perfection like that of the Father who is in heaven; yes, the very prayer of the children of the Kingdom begins with the words, "Our Father who art in heaven." [1] But for all that His Kingdom *is* a kingdom. It is an exterior, organized collection of the sons of the Kingdom; not an intangible, imaginary union of souls that have learned to look to God with the sentiment of filial piety, yet are isolated from one another in their relation to the Spirit of God. Later on we shall see more distinctly that Christ's Church is a true society with everything that goes to make up such a social organization. But already we can understand from Christ's description of His Kingdom that the exterior

[1] Matt. VI, 9.

and collective element is essential to it. It is as external and collective that His Kingdom is portrayed in many parables, like the parable of the field of the father of the family,[1] of the net cast into the sea,[2] of the ten virgins going in procession to meet the bridegroom,[3] of the vineyard,[4] of the great supper.[5]

But men like Harnack, perverting history in the interest of so-called higher criticism, have dared to mutilate the gospel record and to cast out what does not chime in with their prejudices against the presence of any supernatural element. They extol individual liberty under the action of God; but they make of that liberty independence from the will of Christ. God does in truth inspire the sentiment of filial reverence for the Father of all; but He also gives the love for the fraternal bonds, which unite the friends of the Christ into one great Kingdom; He grants a humble esteem for authority, which de-

[1] Matt. XIII, 24–30, 36–43.
[2] Matt. XIII, 47–50.
[3] Matt. XXV, 1–13.
[4] Matt. XX, 1–15; XXI, 33–45.
[5] Matt. XXII, 2–14.

mands submission only to secure the preservation and unsullied transmission of the eternal good things acquired by the Christ, as against the absolute failure of the individualists, who make the whole of Christianity consist in what is only a part, though the flower of the doctrine of Him who is Master and King.

The constitution of Christ's Kingdom, "the Great Charter of the Kingdom," we shall consider next time. For the present let it have sufficed to have looked in the large at the Kingdom of Christ.

As a conclusion of our reflections let us resume what we have seen thus far. Christ did not merely preach a doctrine; He established a kingdom and gave the lie to those who still prate about a religion without authority, or even of a religion without dogmas. It is very fashionable to dilate upon such generalities, and against the true account of the gospels to describe what is supposed to be the real history of the development of Christianity into a Church beyond and against the will and intention of Christ Himself. This fashion permeates the writ-

ings and sermons of many who call themselves ministers of Christ's gospel; it finds its way into much popular literature. But whilst entertaining itself and its adherents by its intellectual gymnastics, it violates the principles of true science and holds at naught the lessons of real history. For Christ is not only a teacher: He is a King and He established His Kingdom. That Kingdom means the sway of God over the souls of men, not indeed in isolated individualism, but in the exterior and collective union which brings about holiness through means left by the King. This sway has its period of uncertain, though lengthy duration here below, and shall have its glorious and endless consummation, when the Lord shall have come again at the close of time and shall have ended forever the conflict between Himself and the "prince of this world," [1] between "the gates of hell" and His own Kingdom from which the smallest atom of evil shall have been purged away.

Let us reverence,—aye, let us adore the King. Let us take Him at His own valua-

[1] John XII, 31.

tion, not according to the estimation of those who are satisfied with a sterile admiration, which refuses to bow down before His claims. Let us open our hearts to His light and His love, that He may keep us near Him in His Kingdom here and hereafter; and let us pray for all mankind with the sweet words taught us by the King, "Thy Kingdom come!"

LECTURE II

THE GREAT CHARTER OF THE KINGDOM

Christ's words to the Twelve. Their antecedents: their vocation. Attitude of "Higher Critics." Teaching power. Authoritative. Infallible. Faith demanded by Christ: exacted by Apostles. Practical application. Sanctifying power. Indirect. Direct. Great gift of sacramental system. Power of jurisdiction. Flows from Charter. Explicit declaration of Christ. The Church a society. Founded by Christ. Not an unforeseen development.

Even a schoolboy or a schoolgirl knows of that incident which looms big in English history as the foundation of the most highly prized liberties of the nation,—the wresting of the Magna Charta from the rapacious and wily King John. In the beginning of the thirteenth century, in 1215, the barons of the land with Cardinal Stephen Langton at their head met their king on the plains of Runnymede and forced him to grant them the Great Charter, which for seven hundred years has been the basis of English consti-

tutional liberty. It has also been at the root of the freedom which we Americans value so highly; for it is the anticipation and the groundwork of the Declaration of Independence and of the primary principles of the Constitution of our country. Rightly, then, do we value it above the wealth of earth and the splendor of pomp and power: quite properly would we stake much upon the defense of the rights which are guaranteed by its provisions. It is the palladium of our liberty and the lasting glory of home and country.

But there is another Great Charter, which is far more valuable than even the great charter of our civic liberties. This is the Great Charter of the Kingdom of Christ. This charter was not wrested from an unwilling monarch: it was granted out of the depths of undying and unfathomable love by the King of whose Kingdom there shall be no end. On the mountain of Galilee this charter was given by the Master to His chosen ones, and contains the constitution of His Kingdom upon earth, His blessed Church, which was to bring men from the

darkness to the light, from misery to happiness, from slavery to the true freedom of the children of God.

In our last lecture we considered the character of Christ the King,—the sacredness of the transcendent sublimity of Christ the man, the hallowed authority of Christ the legate and ambassador of God, the adorable majesty of Christ the Son of God. It was not necessary for us to dwell at any great length and in minute particularity upon the proofs of all this sacred dignity; because for us it was and is a matter of faith divine, held with the unshaken and unshakable certainty due to divine revelation. Neither was it then our purpose to examine at length the reasons which call for this submission of our minds in the obedience of faith. As Christians we took these reasons as already established and reserved their special consideration for another time. Still we did look upon them sufficiently, and at the same time we examined the teaching of the Master with regard to His Kingdom in its larger outlines.

We saw that He corrected the carnal, ma-

terial notion of the Jews, who hoped for a Messiah, who with theatrical splendor of earthly pomp would raise Israel to the heights of political grandeur. We hearkened to Him, as He showed us the falseness of the wild vagaries of those who, making of Him a madman and a fool, hold that He dreamed of an unfulfilled majesty of divine sway soon to be accomplished in the universal upheaval of existing conditions; that He looked for the immediate advent of the power of God to crush the foes of His cause, and to usher in the celestial blessedness of a kingdom which was to have no part in the things of earth or with the living sons of men; that He died deceived, if not a deceiver, and went the way of all flesh into the corruption of unbroken death.

We learned from His holy lips the hollowness of the claims of those erring ones, who declare that He never dreamed of founding a Church which would be His Kingdom; that He did no more than bring before men the realization of their sonship to God; that He taught a morality without dogma; and

that the Church arose as the result of natural evolution from the impulse given by Him to the souls of men, aided by Greek philosophy and Roman political power. From the King we learned that His Kingdom was really and truly a kingdom; that it was not merely the sway of God in the individual soul, but that it had an exterior element of collective organization, whereby its children are bound to one another and to God and are brought to holiness by the means fixed by the King; that His Kingdom was to have a preparatory stage of trial and combat before the arrival of the glorious period of consummation in the mansions of the Father.

Let us now study more in detail the constitution of this Kingdom: especially let us try to fathom the depths of the Great Charter of the Kingdom, whereby Christ gave to His chosen ones the mission and commission to carry on His work for the everlasting welfare of His loved ones.

The forty days of sweet communion of the risen Lord with His dear ones were drawing to a close. He had spoken to them

of the Kingdom of God; He had completed His instructions to them; He had blessed them with mighty powers for the upbuilding of the Kingdom; and soon He was to leave them in His bodily presence and ascend to the glory of the Father. And now on the mountain in Galilee that He "had appointed to them" He stood in the midst of the Apostles and spoke the words which are the Great Charter of Christianity. For He said: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth: going therefore teach ye all nations," (or, as the older Greek version of St. Matthew's original gospel has it, "make disciples of all nations"), "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." [1]

These were glorious words, and they are still ringing down the ages, still justifying the labors and sacrifices and tears and blood of the lovers of the Master, who are spend-

[1] Matt. XXVIII, 18-20.

ing all their efforts for the spread of His Church, while on their lips and in their hearts is the prayer which is the battle-cry of the army of the King, "Thy Kingdom come!" It was the King who spoke, He to whom all power was given in heaven and in earth; it was the blessed Christ, whom we have already considered as the paragon of mankind, the legate and ambassador of God, with the universal approbation of God upon His every word and act,—yes, the Christ who is very God Himself. And it was in the consciousness of supreme and all embracing power that He spoke to His own and sent them upon their mission, partakers of the rights that are His own. "All power is given to me. . . . Going *therefore* teach ye all nations." Were men under obligation to hearken to the words of the Master and to heed them? Then were they bound to do the same to the message of these chosen ones.

For chosen ones they were. It was after a night spent in the prayer of God that the Christ had called His disciples around Him and had chosen from their number twelve

whom He called Apostles,[1]—Simon and James and John and the rest, who would henceforth form a body apart from all others by their nearness to Him, by their share in His ministry, by the intimate relations between themselves and Him.

During the three years of the public ministry of love and mercy Christ prepared them by word and example for the work which was to be theirs. He sent them upon preparatory missionary excursions to preach the Kingdom of God with the power of miracles to confirm the word they spoke.[2] He promised them wonderful gifts for what was ahead. And after the awful cataclysm of the passion He had come to them in the glory of His risen life, had established their faith upon an unshakable foundation, and solaced them in their abandonment. He had made them the associates of His own mission; for on the evening of the first Easter day He had said to them: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."[3]

[1] Luke VI, 12–16.
[2] Luke IX, 1, 2.
[3] John XX, 21.

And now after all this He gave them their mission and commission to all the world, before which they were to take His place.

The words of the King are clear and cogent as He speaks the Great Charter of the Kingdom: "Going therefore teach ye all nations" and the rest. So manifest is their content that it need hardly surprise us that those, who will not heed, should feel that they must call in question the fact that Christ uttered them. And so indeed we find the rationalists and some of the "higher critics" denying their place in the gospel and the reality of their utterance by Christ. God help them! I do not intend to go into this matter now: it is beyond the scope of our present considerations. Suffice it to say on the one hand that there is not a single critical reason of any sound value which would exclude the words in question from the gospel record, and to put them aside would be to reject the whole of the gospel narrative, and by consequence all historical knowledge about events of days gone by; and on the other, that to deny the fact of their utterance by Christ for the reasons

which motive the denial of Liberals and Modernists is to put away the possibility of the supernatural, to close the gates to God's redemption of a fallen race, and to sink down into the bottomless abyss of everlasting despair.

To escape the force of the Great Charter either one must deny the correctness of the record,—and that is absolutely unscientific; or one must deny the character of the King,—and for Christians that is blasphemous, and for others it is the closing of the eyes of the soul to the light which streams forth from Him, who is the very Light of the world.

To the Apostles, then, who constituted a distinct body (as is evident from the name, Apostle, and the number, the Twelve), Christ gave a threefold power, and by the very fact was the author of a real society or organized social body with definite functions and fixed rights and duties. Let us look at this threefold power.

The first power was the teaching power. Christ Himself was a teacher. He was the great prophet who taught the way of God

in truth; and as the Father had sent Him, He sent His Apostles to make disciples of all the children of men, to teach all things whatsoever He had commanded. This teaching power, which was given to them, was one which bore with it the sanction of God and the obligation of submitting to it in absolute and irrevocable assent. This we might have inferred from the fact that Christ sent the Apostles with all the power given to Him in heaven and in earth. But besides this correct inference we have the clear words in which He Himself pointed out the obligatory character of the teaching of the Twelve. For, according to the account of St. Mark, Christ said to His Apostles: "Preach the gospel to every creature. He who believeth" (with a practical faith which includes the other things prescribed), "he who believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: he who believeth not, shall be condemned." [1]

So, it was not an empty office of teaching, to which men might or might not listen according to their own sweet whim; it was

[1] Mark XVI, 15, 16.

obligatory. Men would be acting within their rights when they demanded the credentials of the Christian teachers. But when these credentials had been put before them and had been recognized as valid, then to believe or not to believe was no longer a thing dependent upon their own good-pleasure: it was a duty which bore the sanction of eternal life or eternal damnation.

Such too was the Apostles' idea with respect to the power conferred upon them by the Master. They looked upon it as their chief work to teach mankind by the preaching of the gospel: they demanded "the obedience of faith"[1] not to one or another point of their heaven-delivered message, but to all that Christ had committed to them. After recording the words of their sending, St. Mark says: "But they going forth preached everywhere, the Lord working withal."[2] And in the Acts of the Apostles St. Luke tells us that "every day they ceased not in the temple and from house to house to teach and preach Jesus Christ.[3]

[1] Rom. I, 5.
[2] Mark. XVI, 20.
[3] Acts V, 42.

Listen too to the words of St. Paul: "Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ": [1] "woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel": [2] "we have received . . . apostleship for obedience to the faith in all nations." [3] Note that Paul demanded entire intellectual submission in obedience to the word of God authoritatively proclaimed: "Therefore we also give thanks to God without ceasing, because that when you had received of us the word of the hearing of God" (the word which you heard from God through us), "you received it not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed) the word of God." [4]

In view of this commission of the Christ and this conduct of the Apostles what must an unprejudiced mind think of the maunderings of those who prate about the liberty of the human intellect,—a liberty which to them means independence and license? what of the folly of indifferentists who prattle about one religion being as good as an-

[1] I. Cor. IV, 1.
[2] I. Cor. IX, 16.
[3] Rom. I, 5.
[4] I. Thess. II, 13.

other? what about those who compromise "the deposit of faith" by their misguided charity of toleration? But, it may be said, the Church of Christ must be tolerant. Yes, but as the Master was tolerant, as the Apostles were tolerant. She must show toleration for the weakness of her erring children and for the cowardice of her stumbling little ones; but she cannot show toleration for deliberate infidelity to Christ's word, since that would be to deny His wisdom or His sovereignty; she cannot make dickering compromises with regard to the treasure of truth, which she has been appointed to guard. She must speak with unmistakable voice, strong with the authority given to her by the King of truth, and she must proclaim His gospel to all nations and to every creature.

What is more, that voice of hers is not only authoritative; it is infallible. This does not mean that she will be preserved from all sin; but it does mean that in the exercise of her mission of teaching she will be guarded from the possibility of error. It does not mean that she will forever be the recipient of new

revelations; but it does mean that she will keep unsullied what has been committed to her care. It does not mean that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God will make her words the very words of God; but it does mean that in her human speech she will never contradict the wisdom from on high.

This infallibility, this freedom from the possibility of error in the accomplishment of the mission given to the Twelve is based upon the promises of Christ the King: the words of the Great Charter hold the pledge. "Going therefore teach ye all nations . . . and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." This is the promise; and it is the promise of God Himself. We Christians can see this readily enough, since to us Christ the King is very God. But even for those who do not yet recognize the divinity of the Master, these words are the words of one who is at least the legate of God with universal divine approbation upon His words and deeds; and hence at least indirectly and mediately these words hold the promise of God, who promises what Christ promises.

Now the expression, "I am with you," when spoken by God, bears a very definite meaning, which was well understood by the Apostles; for in the language of Scripture these words always mean that God will bring to a successful issue the thing of which there is question, when He speaks the words, "I am with you." It will not be necessary and it would take too long to enlarge upon this truth; yet it is unquestionably a truth. If God promises to be with one in war, victory is assured by the divine pledge: if God promises to be with one in an errand of prophetic message, the success of the embassy is secured. And so when God promises to be with the Twelve in their work of teaching to all mankind the truths committed to them by the Christ, the triumphant certainty of that teaching is so solid that there can be no question of defection. The power of God will be ever near to supplement the feebleness of human instruments in the teaching of truth, and the gate whereby error might enter is closed forever.

Before the glorious day of mission from the mountain in Galilee the Master had

promised that the Spirit of God would be with His Apostles in the prosecution of their work. "The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and will bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."[1] "It is expedient for you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send Him to you. . . . But when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will teach you all truth."[2] And with this efficacious assistance of the divine Spirit of truth it could and can never be that error should be coupled.

Christ might, indeed, have made many different provisions for the safeguard of His revelation. He might have given infallible individual guidance to each separate soul, as some of our separated brethren mistakenly maintain that He does: from time to time as the years went by He might have sent prophets to call back the wanderers to the truth which they had lost or aban-

[1] John XIV, 26.
[2] John XVI, 7, 13.

doned, as He did for the Jews. He might have done this; but He did not. That is not what He promised, and history has shown that that is not what He has done. He appointed His Apostles as authoritative teachers and He gave to them the prerogative of infallibility. And, with all humble reverence be it said, Christ had to give such an infallible voice in view of what He demanded of mankind with respect to the teaching of the Apostolic College. For under pain of eternal damnation He demanded faith,—the absolute, unrestricted, irreformable assent of the mind to His revelation as preached by the Twelve.

And this unconditional assent, which was to be without reservation, the Apostles demanded from men. They might all have said what Paul did say to the Galatians: "Though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." [1] There was to be no possibility for correction, because there was to be no possibility of a mistake.

[1] Gal. I, 8.

Now, not even God Himself could exact such an absolute assent from man and under such a terrible sanction, unless man was assured of the impossibility of error under such guidance. Otherwise God's wisdom and absolute holiness would be violated. For then, although God made man's mind for truth, man would be bound to bow down his intellect in absolute assent where possibly error might lurk, and, should the assent happen to have been given to falsehood, the mind would forever be held back from truth and chained to error by the irrevocable character of the act demanded of it; and this would be subversive of the wisdom and the rectitude of the Most High. Since, then, it was precisely this irrevocable and absolute assent that Christ demanded from men with regard to the teaching of the Apostles, and since He did not guarantee the individual infallibility of each of the faithful, He could not have done otherwise than bestow on His authorized teachers the gift of entire freedom from error in the accomplishment of the mission entrusted to them.

And right here, without entering upon a

path of controversy, which in the spirit of charity it will be well to postpone until it cannot be avoided, we may well desire that this unshakable truth of the infallibility of the teaching power of Christ's Church should be taken to heart by all, as they study Christ's revelation about that Church. The rule of faith for His followers is the living voice of the Apostles; it is not the Holy Scripture, though that Scripture is sacred with the holiness of God's own word. There was no Scripture of the New Testament when the Apostles began to carry out the injunction of the Master for the propagation of the "gospel of the Kingdom." Christ Himself did not write; He taught by preaching: and His command to the Twelve was not "Going therefore write and distribute the word," but "Going therefore teach ye all nations," "preach the gospel to every creature."

The Apostles fulfilled the mandate of Christ. All of them fulfilled it; yet not one half of the Apostolic College left writings which are part of Holy Scripture; and all of them looked upon the preaching of the

word, not its writing, as the great work for which they were commissioned. Sacred and worthy of love and veneration as is the Holy Book, it is not absolutely necessary for the preservation of revealed truth. Even had it never existed; even though by an impossibility it should perish, we should lose none of God's revelation, so long as the living voice of the teaching-body established by Christ was true to its mission: whereas on the other hand without this teaching-body even the sanctity of Scripture would not be sufficient to preserve unsullied through the ages the revelation of Christ the King.

Again, if Christ's Church is to last forever with the constitution that He gave it unaltered to the end (and that it is so to last we shall consider in the next lecture, as we dwell on "Some Prerogatives of the Kingdom"), the church which today holds that it is His true Church, must lay claim to definitive, authoritative, infallible pronouncement upon His revelation. It does not, of course, follow that a church is Christ's true Church just because it claims

to have this power; but it does follow from the constitution of Christ's Church that a church which does not lay claim to such a prerogative, which does not dare to give a final and irreformable decision on matters touching divine revelation, is not and cannot be that true Church. For it would have been unfaithful to its destiny; it would have thrown away its Great Charter; it would have spurned the high glory of the Twelve; it would have ceased to be, even if it ever had been, the Church of Christ.

It is the teaching power which stands forth prominently in the Great Charter; but it is not the only power therein contained: there is the power of sanctifying by religious rites and there is the power of spiritual jurisdiction. These we must consider briefly; and first the power of sanctifying. Christ had come that men "might have life and might have it more abundantly"; [1] He had come "to save that which was lost," [2] to bring men to holiness here and finally to perfected sanctity in the everlasting joy of

[1] John X, 10.
[2] Matt. XVIII, 11.

His Father's home. His hallowed doctrine, safeguarded by the teaching power of His Church, was to help to this sanctification; nay, He had said, "This is eternal life that they know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."[1] But in His great and overwhelming love for men He instituted sacred external rites, which not only tended indirectly to holiness of soul, but wrought this sanctification immediately and directly: and these sacred rites too He placed in the hands of the Twelve. In the words spoken on the mountain in Galilee He referred to but one of these rites, —to that one which is the door to the household of the family of God, the sacred initiation into the Kingdom, the holy sacrament of baptism. It was, and the Apostles later showed how they understood the Master,— it was His own baptism in the name of the triune God, distinct from the ablutions of the Jews and from the baptism of John the Baptist. It was the condition for discipleship and necessary for life everlasting. It was the baptism of which He said, "Unless a

[1] John XVII, 3.

man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" [1] here or hereafter.

The records of the New Testament tell of other rites of the same sacred character, as, for instance, of the "imposition of hands" [2] for the giving of the Holy Ghost, of the "breaking of bread" [3] in the Eucharistic banquet, of the judicial power of the forgiveness of sins.[4] We need not enter here upon a lengthy consideration of these rites, which are the sacraments of the Church of Christ, because it is not necessary for the object now before us. In the study of the sacramental system it is seen from Scripture and tradition that the sacraments are seven in number, each and all instituted by Christ for the salvation of the souls of men and for help in their every need from the cradle to the grave.

It is a wondrous gift of love from God to man, is this sacramental system. By it man enters into supernatural life, regenerated in

[1] John III, 5.
[2] Acts VIII, 14–19; XIX, 1–6.
[3] Acts II, 42 cf. I. Cor. X, 16.
[4] John XX, 22, 23.

God: he is sealed unto the conflict for truth and holiness: he is raised up again, if he has fallen in the fight: he is fed with "the corn of the elect and the wine springing forth virgins": [1] he is prepared for the last struggle against the foe whose hatred is without end and without truce: he is provided with the ministers of his God-given religion: he receives the benediction and the consecration of heaven upon his love and the help divine to raise up unto the Lord children, who are to be the sons and daughters of God. Truly, we who are of the dear old Church can never thank God enough for this gift which is ours: we can never pray enough, until those who have it not are blessed with this seven-fold channel of celestial grace.

What in heaven's name would we do without these means of strength supernal? More especially, what would we do without the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, where our Savior Himself is really present to solace, to support, and to come into our hearts and make us stronger than our weak-

[1] Zach. IX, 17.

ness? Oh, let us use these sacraments with eager desire and whole-hearted love, and let us pray that the Kingdom of God may come to those who are outside, and who even though guiltless in their ignorance are deprived of the overflowing riches of the love of Christ.

This ministerial power, then, for the sanctifying of the souls of men by the religious rites instituted by the Christ is the second power committed to the Apostolic College and contained in the Great Charter of Christian freedom and holiness. And the third power is that of spiritual jurisdiction, the power of ruling in the realm of the soul.

The Apostles had the duty of teaching all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded: and together with this duty they had the right of demanding that all men submit themselves to their teaching and receive the sacred rite of baptism unto initiation into life divine. Those who had complied with their obligation of hearing the Apostles as they would have heard Christ Himself and who had received

Christian baptism, by the very fact were subject to Apostolic authority and were bound to render obedience in all things, which pertained to leading lives in accordance with the teachings of the Master. The Apostles' office was not merely an office of preaching, authorized indeed, but without any obligation on the part of the hearers. This false position of some erring heretics has already been disproved by the words of Christ, who taught that men were bound to hear. Furthermore, in addition to their authoritative and obligatory proposition of Christ's revelation it was part of the Apostolic office to safeguard this teaching by laws, enforced by such penalties as were fitted to the attainment of the end proposed. They were the approved Christian teachers; and by consequence they were to rule the children of the Kingdom with the authority of the King, who had sent them as He had been sent by the Father with all power given to Him in heaven and in earth.

During the days of the public ministry Christ had promised to the chosen Twelve this jurisdiction in the things of the soul.

After speaking of the necessity of humility for fruitful participation in the Kingdom and of the value of the souls of those who were to be brought to God, the Master spoke of fraternal correction in the spirit of charity. From this He passed on to the authoritative process against the stubborn, who were to be treated with summary severity; and He gave the reason for the hardness of punishment against the recalcitrant. "But if thy brother offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone; . . . and if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand. And if he will not hear them, tell the Church: and if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican,"[1] let him be cut off from association with the elect of God. And why this severe penalty? Because the offender would not "hear the Church," would not obey the Church; because of persistent disobedience to the power of the Apostles. Yes, it was disobedience against constituted

[1] Matt. XVIII, 15–17.

authoritative jurisdiction. "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."[1] Thus did Christ promise to them the power of binding and loosing, the power of imposing a bond or taking it away,—evidently not the physical bond of chains of iron, but the moral bond of obligation, which holds the will of man under the sway of jurisdictional power.

This power of governing the children of the Kingdom the Apostles exercised with the full consciousness of the reality of their authority. They made laws; they judged the transgressors of these laws; they threatened and inflicted penalties in the case of those who violated their mandates.

So, these are the contents of the Great Charter: these are the three powers committed by the King to the Kingdom which is His Church. He determined those who ought to be the members of His Church,—all mankind: He determined those who

[1] Matt. XVIII, 18.

would actually be members of His Church and remain such,—those who after baptism guarded the subjection to the threefold Apostolic power: He determined the end and the manner in which that end was to be attained: He gave the authority which was to conserve the Church. And therefore He was the author of His Church, which He founded in the form of an organized society. Facts: all this is shown by facts. In view of these facts how shallow the system, how hollow the claims of rationalists like Harnack, Loisy and their like, who maintain that the Christian Church grew up as something which more or less naturally resulted from the work of Christ, but quite beyond, and even against His intention! We have seen how He did intend to found, and how He actually founded His Kingdom, which is His Church, as a true external, collective, social organization, independent of earthly power,—a real, perfect society.

Yet men like those to whom I have referred make Paul, and not Christ, the real author of the Christian Church, altogether against the intention and will of the Master.

They extol Paul as the wonder of the ages, because he dared to cast aside what they call "the husk" [1] of the teaching of Jesus, who according to them had never dreamed of a universal Kingdom, and because he was great enough to make of Christianity a world-religion. They praise the other Apostles because "after a bitter struggle they associated themselves with Paul's principles." [2] The honeyed sweetness of praise like this is full of the venomous bitterness of black poison; for the Apostles are lauded for having consciously taken steps, which were neither foreseen nor intended by Him from whom they held their commission. Such an attitude of mind, such a manner of conduct could be understood in the Apostles, if they had been rationalists who looked on Christ as a poor deluded man: it is inconceivable in the face of concrete fact; for the Apostles most certainly preached the Christ as very God and carried out to their dying breath the injunction laid on them by Him.

In our following lecture we shall con-

[1] Harnack, *What is Christianity?* p. 182 English trans.
[2] id. ib.

sider "Some Prerogatives of the Kingdom,"—among others, its perpetual continuance to the end of time and its necessity for all men: the essential constitution of the Church as set forth in the Great Charter is now clear. As we recognize the littleness of our own feeble minds in grappling with great truths of eternal import; as we look down the paths of history and see the aberrations of even mighty intellects, when they spurned the help of God, we may well thank the King of truth for giving to His Church the power of authoritative and infallible promulgation of His sacred words of good-tidings. As we realize our colossal weakness in the face of the trials of life and before our enemies, who are "the spirits of wickedness in the high places," [1] we may well pour forth the expression of loving and humble gratitude for Christ's gift of the power of sanctification by ministerial rites, which keep us close to the divine all through the days of our sojourning and lead us on in safety to our heavenly home. And as we come to see with deeper insight the dire

[1] Ephes. VI, 12.

catastrophes which owe their birth to the uncurbed license of false independence, we may well hold fast to our heart of hearts our loyal submission to the sacred power of jurisdiction, with which the Master blessed the Twelve. That power is to rule our souls in the ways of God, lest we depart from this path of peace and wander away into the darkness, where death and despair are lurking to overwhelm the unwary. Yes, as we prize the glorious heritage of the freedom of the children of God, let us reverence and love the King for His gift of the Great Charter, and by our humble docility, our appreciative love, our unswerving obedience let us lead lives worthy of the children of the Kingdom.

LECTURE III

SOME PREROGATIVES OF THE KINGDOM

Review. Perpetuity. Double aspect of Apostles' position. Meaning of indefectibility. Adversaries. Christ's will: parables: promise to Peter: to the Twelve. One only Church. Proof. Branch theory. Discussion. Necessity. Antecedent probability. Christ's formal declaration. Not only necessary by command: a means to end. Can it be supplied? Toleration true and false.

We have considered the Great Charter of Christ's Kingdom, and have studied the essential constitution of the Church, which the Master founded for the preservation and propagation of His revealed religion. We have seen that by the will of Christ, and not as the result of natural evolution of a movement, which was inaugurated by Him but developed beyond and against His intentions, there was founded an organized social body with definite powers and functions. These powers are all included in the Master's words of mission, which form the Magna Charta of Christianity; and they are

three in number. First, there is the power of teaching with authority the gospel of Christ to all mankind, in such sort that everyone is bound under the sanction of salvation or damnation to hearken to the words of the accredited witnesses. By the power of God the definitive pronouncements of the Apostolic College in matters of divine revelation are preserved from the possibility of error through the gift of infallibility. Secondly, the Apostles received the power of ministering to the salvation of the souls of men through the religious rites, which Christ instituted to apply to men the fruits of His superabundant redemption. And thirdly, the Twelve were gifted with the power of jurisdictional sway over the souls of men to keep mankind from the wanderings of human pride and human weakness in the pathway of faith and morals.

Possessing these powers from the King, the Apostolic Body constitutes the nobler part of the society, founded by Christ for the good of the children of men: these three rights, held by them, are the essentials in the constitution of the Church of Jesus Christ.

However, in order to come to a clearer and more comprehensive idea of the Kingdom of the King, we must go a step farther and consider "Some Prerogatives of the Kingdom,"—some of the special qualifications affecting the gift of the threefold power. These prerogatives, and let me state them at once for the sake of clearness, are: perpetuity or unfailing continuance, unicity or the exclusion of other churches than the *one* Church of Christ from the institution of God, and the necessity of this Church for all mankind in order to come to the eternal destiny of unmeasured joy in the home of the Father.

And first we must consider the unbroken, continued permanence of the Church of the Master. From the very outset let us remember that we are not to exercise our imaginative ingenuity in conjuring up all the possible ways in which Christ might have proceeded in the accomplishment of the purpose of His love for men. As we have seen before, He might have provided many ways for the safeguard of His revelation and re-

ligion; but He chose one way,—and that way consisted in the establishment of an organized body with the definite powers, which we have considered. Similarly in the present connection, Christ might have given to His Apostles certain powers, which they would exercise during the period of their mortal life, in such a way that other provision would be made for the ages that were to come before "the world would be rolled up as a scroll." But we are not to consider what He might have done: we are to look at what He actually did do.

Now as a matter of actual fact, we find from the unshakable records of the gospel history that the powers of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling men in the realm of the spirit were not to cease with the death of the Apostles. These loved ones of the Lord were indeed to go the way of all flesh: they were to bow down their heads beneath the stroke of death in the glorious confession unto blood of their loyalty to the Master whom they loved. Yet their work was to go on and on through the passing years un-

til the crack of doom and the magnificent advent of the King in "much power and majesty."[1]

The Apostles bore a twofold character, to which we must give attentive consideration. On the one hand they were the Apostles of the Master, called by a vocation immediately divine, sent to the work of the first promulgation of the gospel and the initial proclamation of the words and works of the King. In this capacity they were endowed with certain qualities, which were their individual privileges and were not to be repeated in the persons of successors. Never again after the call of the Twelve and of Paul (and possibly of Barnabas) were there to be others, who would be sent directly by the Christ or the Spirit of God upon their mission to mankind. As the first heralds to the world of the message of Christ their place would never be taken by others.

But besides this their special prerogative of Apostles of the Master, there was the fact that they were the pastors of the Church of Christ and possessed as such the threefold

[1] Matt. XXIV, 30.

power which we have thought about: they were the teachers of men, the ministers unto sanctification, and the rulers unto salvation of the faithful ones whom they brought to the Christ. Even as pastors, it is true, they held from the Master some gifts which were of an extraordinary and personal character and as such were not to be transmitted to their successors. But for all this the ordinary powers of their pastoral charge were to go on even after they had paid the debt of nature to the grim angel of death. As a moral body for teaching, sanctifying, and ruling Christ's Church they were to be indefectible,—undying until the end of time; for the Master had willed that their threefold office should be exercised until He should come again.

Yes, Christ willed that His Church should endure; and this means two things. First of all, it means that by the will of Christ never until the day of doom will there come a time, when His Church will give place to another and more perfect economy of God with men. There was a time in the gray dimness of the past when men lived accord-

ing to what was called "the law of nature," in which no positive revelation of God as to the manner of His worship had been vouchsafed. Then came the period of "the Law," when God Himself through Moses gave the Law to His chosen people and prescribed the elaborate ceremonial of sacrificial rites. Both of these dispensations passed away; but there will never come a time, when the Church of Christ, founded upon the Apostles, will disappear before another dispensation more perfect and uplifting.

In the second place, the perpetuity of Christ's institution means not only unbroken continuance to the end of time, but also the absence of any essential change in that which Christ founded. Accidental modifications there may and will be; changes of ecclesiastical law and discipline will and must be made to meet the changing exigencies of the passing years; development of doctrinal teaching, as more clearly and intimately grasping the full content of "the deposit," [1] delivered for once and all, will mark the

[1] I. Tim. VI, 20.

growth of a living moral personality. But the essentials of the constitution of the Church must remain forever unchanged: there must be no substantial modification of its nature even by way of addition: the same society with a visible teaching authority, a visible system of sanctifying rites, a visible ruling jurisdiction must forever visibly do its work,—or else the work of Christ will have perished. "Semper eadem," "always and the same," are the words which might be blazoned on the banner of Christ's Church to float proudly to the air of heaven in peace or in war, until the angel of God will declare with a mighty voice that time shall be no more.

We shall presently see more in detail that such is the Kingdom of Christ as He founded it; but let us first look for a moment at the position of those who deny all this. There are many (oh, so many!), who have not grasped this sacred truth about the Master's work. Many of our separated brethren, driven by the desperate need of defending an anomalous position, would restrict the promise of unfailing existence to the fiction

of an "invisible Church" which they have dreamed. Others would confine the transmission of powers to some unimportant and almost negligible qualities, but to the exclusion of the authoritative, infallible teaching power, which is at the very heart of the Great Charter of the Kingdom. Others maintain that Christianity is a religion of continued progress, subject of necessity to adaptation to the changing environment of time and social conditions; but in all this they forget the words of the Master, who gave His Apostles the office of preaching, not their own opinions, but all things whatsoever He had commanded,[1]—that and nothing else. Again, we have heard of the fanciful illusion, invented by Fichte, defended by Schelling, and accepted in part by others, according to which a threefold different Church is successively in possession: first, the Church of Peter, which is the Catholic Church; then the Church of Paul, which is the Protestant Church; and finally the Church of John, which has come of late years, or is still to bless the world with the

[1] cf. Matt. XXVIII, 20.

sweetness of the spirit of "the disciple whom Jesus loved": [1]—but all this excludes the Church of Christ "always and the same." Besides, there were the heretics of the early ages of Christianity, like the Montanists and Manicheans; the false-mystics of the middle ages, who had not a little to do with the rise of the so-called Reformation: there are exploiters of newer revelations, like the Swedenborgians, the Quakers, the Mormons, the Spiritualists, all of whom teach that new and important revelations have been given by heaven to earth, and that others are still to be given to their churches in substitution for the teachings given by Christ to the Apostles. Yes, it's the old, old story of error being myriad-faced, whilst truth is one in its simplicity.

In opposition to all these shifting shapes of error we have the clear manifestation of the will of Christ. He willed that His Church should last unchanged throughout the ages, always doing the work which He had given to the Twelve to do for the souls of men. To realize this it is only necessary

[1] John XXI, 20.

to look with humble heart and unprejudiced mind at the words of Christ Jesus about His Church.

To begin with, there is His instruction in the form of parable. For instance, our Lord had told the story of the vigilant servants,[1] who were to be ready for their lord's coming at any time and thus show themselves worthy of the reward that would be theirs. Simon Peter asked our blessed Lord whether His words referred to the faithful in general or to the Apostles in particular; and in reply our Savior spoke the parable of the faithful steward, who on the departure of his lord fulfilled the office of overseer for the whole household.[2] The parable is first and foremost an exhortation to fidelity in their charge to those who have been appointed the stewards in the house of God; but back of this appeal is the teaching that the stewards will have charge of the family until the lord returns. Now, Christ is the Lord who was to go away; for the time was at hand, when He was going to withdraw His outward

[1] Luke XII, 37–40.
[2] Luke XII, 41–48.

presence from His own, not to appear again in visible manifestation until His coming at the end of time: unto the end the Apostles were to be the faithful stewards of the household over which Christ had placed them. Yes, unto the end! For to everyone, who does not look upon Christ as a mistaken visionary, these words of His tell of His survey of the place of the Apostles in His Church until time would be no more and He Himself would come in the majesty of God to demand an account of all the subjects of His Kingdom.

But not only in parable did Christ teach this truth. At Cæsarea Philippi He spoke to Peter the magnificent promise, which we shall consider in the next lecture about the "Primate of the Kingdom." There and then with the fulness of the power which was His Christ promised that "the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church."[1] That was the promise of the legate of God, Christ Jesus, who was Himself really and truly divine.

The words may be taken in either of two

[1] Matt. XVI, 18.

senses; but in both cases they promise the undying continuance of the Church. The word "hell" may mean "death," as some prefer to take it: "the gates of hell" then speak of "the power of death," which is altogether insuperable. In this case what Christ said was that not even the power of death, before which everything earthly must bow in subjection, would be more insuperable than the Church that was His; that His Church could never be touched; that death itself in its universal domination would not be more supreme than His Church, which was exempt from its dominion and would live on in its deathless sway. Or again (and the interpretation seems preferable in view of the form of the expression) "hell" may mean "the infernal regions" and its dread inhabitants; and "the gates of hell" then stand for the power of the arch-enemy, whose kingdom is opposed to the Kingdom of Christ in the endless battle, that was begun at the commencement of our Lord's public ministry, that went on until the climax of Calvary and will continue until the end of time. In this understanding of the text the words of

Christ promise that in this unending conflict not even the power of *the* enemy who is the chief of the powers of evil, and consequently no power that is less, will conquer His beloved Church. Assault there will be and the undying attack of the foe whose hate knows no ending; but never will the onsets of that enemy overthrow the Kingdom of the Master.

It is invincible from without: so too is it preserved from the internal corruption which would undo the work of the King. We remember the words of the Great Charter, giving to the Apostles their powers and the promise of divine help: "Going therefore teach ye all nations. . . . And behold I am with you" [1] and the rest. Christ's efficacious assistance is pledged to them for their mission; for He said, "I am with you." How long? "I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." Yes, that is the promise of the Christ. "All days" He would be with them without any interruption of His divine care, "even to the consummation of the world."

[1] Matt. XXVIII, 19, 20.

When in the day of harvesting the angels of God will have separated the wheat from the cockle; when the division between the faithful and the recreant will have taken place; when in the face of all mankind the Judge of the living and the dead will have exercised His sway over all the sons of men, rendering to each one according to his works, before He delivers up the Kingdom to God the Father; when the Church militant will have been transformed into the Church triumphant and the joy of God will ravish the true children of the Kingdom, whilst eternal reprobation will have been meted out to those who have trifled with the Master's mercy and scorned the love of the King,—then, and not till then, will the earthly Kingdom of Christ have an end.

Yes, the Master's commission to the Twelve was to go on after they had been gathered to their fathers: their work was to live forever in their successors. They understood this clearly. So, they made provision for the carrying on of the message committed to them,—and this through the ministry of the chosen ones on whom they

in turn placed the glorious burden of service by the imposition of hands and a share in the ruling of souls. That was their care, as the sacred writings and the records of the history of the primitive ages show beyond the reach of caviling criticism.

Down through the ages the Church of Christ was to journey, walking with the sons of men with her message of peace and love and holiness: her steps were to lead her to every clime through every age, though her footprints were to be marked with her blood, shed beneath the hand of fierce persecution, as she strove in mighty battle against "the gates of hell." As long as there would be men to be brought to God in the way fixed by the King of all mankind, she was to be there to bring them,—and that would be until time would be no more. As long as there would be hearts to be strengthened against the assaults of hell and the weakness of faltering selfishness, she was to be there to give the light and the strength and the love,—and that would be until the last trumpet call. As long as there would be souls to be led to a share in the abundant redemption

of the Victim of the world unto the remission of sin and the sanctification of the sons of God, she would be in the midst of them doing the work of the Master,—and that would be until the consummation of all things at the end of time. Without change and without the weakening decay of old age she would live on, active, vigorous, deathless, until the second coming of the King, as He left her when He mounted up from earth into the glory of the Father.

She was to do His work, and she alone; for there is but one true Church of the Master, one only Kingdom of the King. This is the second prerogative of the Kingdom, that it is without a peer or an authorized rival. One and alone Christ's Church stands as His unique Kingdom. He might have left a score of churches; He left but one. He might have instituted many independent principalities of spiritual power; He founded only one.

The organized society which was to do His work was gifted with the threefold power that reached out to all mankind. The Apostles were to teach Christ's whole gospel, not

to some, but to all nations; and with such a teaching-body there was no room for any other authorized doctrinal teacher. The rites ministering unto sanctification were to bring holiness to all the faithful gathered into the fold; and there was no place for another sacramental system to apply to men the merits of the Redeemer. The spiritual jurisdiction of the perpetual Apostolic College embraced all, who, not only by right, but in fact belonged to the Master by submission to His institution; there was nothing left for any other spiritual ruling.

Moreover, Christ spoke of His Kingdom, not of His Kingdoms: He yearned over His flock, not over many disunited folds. Nay, according to the mind of St. Paul, to whose words we shall return on another occasion, Christ's Church was the mystic body of which Christ was the head: there are neither two heads for one body nor several bodies for one head under penalty of a monstrosity being the result.

In view of this clear teaching by Christ it is really hard to understand the position of those who speak of various churches

without the slightest organic connection as being indifferently the Church of Christ. They make Him the founder of a dozen independent societies, or rather (and this seems to be the solution of the paradox) they really deny Him to have been the founder of any Church at all. In that supposition their position is understood easily enough; but the supposition itself contradicts the facts which we dwelt upon, when we saw that Christ did found an organized body with the unity which is necessary for every social organization.

There is one theory to which I must refer in passing, which seems at first glance to stand with the idea of Christ's Church being one and only one, and at the same time not one; and this is what is called "the branch theory" by some of the Anglicans. According to them the Greek Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Anglican Church are three branches (others call them three sisters; others, three provinces): and the three together constitute the one Church of the Master.

The theory would seem to save the truth

of Christ's Church being only one; but it does so by denying the essential unity, which is necessary for every true society. Not by the wildest flight of imagination could a person call three states one and the same nation, when each state rejects the authority of the other two, when each clings to its own autonomy, when each stands steadfast beneath the folds of a distinct banner. No more readily can one admit these three churches,—for three they are,—as constituent parts of one and the same Church and Kingdom of the Christ. For most unquestionably they are opposed. Between the Greek Church and the Roman Catholic Church, from which the Greek Church cut itself off, the opposition has lasted in open acknowledgment for over eight centuries: the separation of the Church of England from both Greece and Rome, for well nigh four hundred years. These three churches do not admit any one authority; they have their separate banners, which are battle flags beneath which they fight, not with bitterness of heart against the adherents of the other churches (that may God avert in the cause of sweet charity!), but with uncom-

promising opposition to the others' claims, which they look upon as false and little short of blasphemous. No, the Greek Church, the Anglican Church, and the Catholic Church are not one. Whichever of them is the true Church of Christ,—thank God! we know, and shall consider more at length in a subsequent lecture,—each of them is distinct from the others, and all together cannot be the one true Church of the Master.

The third prerogative of the Kingdom is its necessity; and this is obviously of supreme importance to understand. Once again, Christ might have done any one of several things; and among them He might have instituted His Church as a very useful means of attaining heaven, without imposing upon men any obligation of belonging to it. The supposition, it is true, is not likely even apart from the explicit declarations of the King, which tell us that as a matter of fact He made His Church obligatory. For on the face of it, it was not to be expected that He would work out the atonement for the human race according to the plan of His all-merciful love, that besides He would take the very

great care He did in choosing and training and authorizing His Apostles for their work, which was to last to the end of time,—and then remain quite indifferent as to whether men would think it worth their while to avail themselves of the means supplied by His love, or would pass them by in utter disregard, if not in positive contempt.

But he did not leave us in any doubt as to what He intended when He founded His Church. He made this Church necessary for all men in order to come to salvation, in such sort that one who knowingly and willingly and culpably lives and dies outside of the external, organized body, which is Christ's one and only perpetual Church on earth, cannot hope to have part with Christ in the eternal joys of heaven.

There is no getting away from the conclusion, if one admits the dignity of Christ and His right to fix the way in which the fruits of His redemption are to be applied. For, by His will it is necessary for men to believe, to be baptized, to hear the Church in order to have part with Him. By His divine determination faith is a condition for bap-

tism for all who are capable of faith, and repentance too for past sins, if the life of God with its regenerating power is to come to the soul: by baptism one is solemnly initiated into the Kingdom of Christ: by obedience one remains there.

These points have been solidly established before and it will not be necessary to repeat the consideration of them here. It will be enough to hearken to the words: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."[1] "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned."[2] "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of heaven."[3] "He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."[4] Yes, faith, baptism, and obedience to the Church are necessary for salvation. Now precisely by these

[1] Matt. XXVIII, 18, 19.
[2] Mark XVI, 16.
[3] John III, 5.
[4] Matt. XVIII, 17.

means does one become and remain a member of Christ's one, true, perpetual Church; and hence as a matter of inevitable consequence that Church is necessary for the attainment of salvation.

If, when Christ walked the earth, a man had flouted His teaching in the conscious rejection of His heaven-attested mission, could he hope for a share in Christ's beneficence? No more can one hope for this, when he scorns the authority of the Church that teaches with the power of the Master. Could one who would have nothing to do with the means of sanctification of the Great High-Priest of mankind dare to face his Mediator with calm assurance? No more can he do so, when he wilfully and sinfully rejects the ministry of the Church which guards the sacraments of Christ. Could one who for fear or pride or love of earthly ease denied the rights of the King to his obedient loyalty dare look to that King for the reward of glorious triumph? No more can he do so, when he obstinately disobeys the Church; for, said the King, "he that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you,

despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me." [1]

Men had the right to demand of the Christ the credentials of His mission: men have the right to exact proofs of the claims of the Church. But after the credentials have been shown, after the claims have been proved, there exists the undoubted obligation to follow the Christ, to embrace His Church. Not to do so is to be guilty of grievous sin: to live and die in that sin is to purchase for oneself the unending horrors of despairing damnation.

To belong to Christ's one true Church is, then, a matter of serious precept; but it is more than that. Ignorance of the existence of a command excuses one from the guilt of violation of precept, if the ignorance itself is inculpable; but even guiltless ignorance with consequent neglect of the provisions of Christ does not leave one in the same condition as if he had availed himself of what Christ has laid down. No, to enter Christ's Church and to remain in it is not only to fulfill a command of the Master: it is to make

[1] Luke X, 16.

use of the means fixed by Him for the attainment of eternal life. His Church is the way staked out by Him, by which all must travel towards the Father's home: it is the general, ordinary economy of salvation. Although by reason of inculpable ignorance one is guiltless in missing the way, still he will not reach the term of the journey, except by the paths left for those,—and those only,—who cannot take the way traced by the Savior of mankind.

Of course, there is a large place left for good faith and corresponding good will, because "God will have all men to be saved," [1] and has therefore reserved for His special providence the helping of those who without fault of their own cannot profit by the means determined by His general and ordinary economy of salvation. An act of perfect love of God or an act of true contrition based upon the love of God for His own sake will bring man to God; and it will keep him united to God, so long as sin does not break the sacred link of union. But this very act of love or sorrow includes the will to do

[1] I. Tim. II, 4.

what God has demanded of men. Membership in His one, necessary Church He has demanded: so, the will to comply with this divine provision is part of the act of love that cleaves to God. And with His divine insight, which looks down into the secret recesses of the soul, God reads that will enwrapped in love, and He takes "the will for the deed," when the deed is impossible of fulfillment to the loyal fidelity of His loving child.

Yet with the largest possible limits assigned to the compensatory value of good faith and good will it remains forever true that the Church is Christ's way to heaven, and that, to use the language of the first preachers of the gospel of the Kingdom, it is "the ark of salvation."[1] Even though there are ways which may serve as substitutes, then, and then only, when this way is impossible without the fault of the individual, it is far from true to say that the condition of those who are within the visible pale of Christ's Church does not differ much from the state of those who are innocently

[1] Cf. I. Peter III, 20, 21.

outside of it. That statement is false with the falseness of "the father of lies."[1] Those who in guiltless ignorance are without, may come to God and may reach eternal life. But they are like wanderers from the true pathway to heaven, who glimpse an occasional ray of light divine to lead them on, whilst the children of the Kingdom are walking on in the full splendor of the Sun of Justice: they are kept from starvation by the crumbs which fall from the King's table, while the children of the Kingdom are seated at the bountiful banquet-board of love divine.

Far be it from us to take upon ourselves the office of judge, and to pass sentence upon the sincerity or insincerity of those who are not united to the Master's visible Church by the bonds of external communion! Far be it from us to place limits to the mercy of God, as shown forth in the inscrutable ways of His special and individual providence over the souls of such as do what lies in their power! But equally far be it from us to take part in the supercilious, careless indif-

[1] John VIII, 44.

ferentism of the world, which makes of Christ's supreme work a mere nothing, that may be slighted and scorned with impunity, and which denies the power of Jesus Christ to determine with sovereign right the manner in which men are to share in the redemption which He accomplished on the blood-stained gibbet of the cross!

And alas! this spirit, which calls itself "broad-minded" and "tolerant," stalks through the world and leaves men estranged from God. It talks of religion without dogmas, of the deeper meaning of faith behind the formalism of creeds; and it makes of Christianity a futile nothing, which is of no more worth than the vagaries of paganism. And beyond this folly of liberal indifferentists, who say that it makes no difference whether a man believes or what he believes, and who thus contradict the words and the mission of the Son of God, there is the hardly less fatal indifferentism of those who call themselves Christians and dare to say that all so-called Christian bodies are but various forms of the same institution of the King; that all these roads lead to the same

goal; that God is the Father and Christ the Brother of all who follow any of these Christian churches; that a consummation devoutly to be hoped for is a union of the Christian bodies by the elimination of their points of difference,—which means the compromise of divine revelation or the denial of any Christian revelation at all; that the more of individual liberty (which spells license), the more of the freedom proper to the gospel reigns.

Great heavens! And what about the fact that Christ did make a revelation binding upon all mankind; that He did leave behind Him an authorized guardian of that revelation to keep it to the end of time; that He is the author of one only Church; that as men value the love of the King and the salvation of their immortal souls they are bound to become and remain members of that Church which is *the* way to life everlasting? Toleration, which means respect for the convictions of other men, which means the refusal to assume to ourselves the office of judging in the place of God, which means the charity that should be accorded

even to the erring,—this is a blessed thing born of love for God and man. But toleration, which would mean a scornful indifference to the exclusive claims of the truth of God, a contempt for the revelation of the All-Wise, a neglect of the supreme sovereignty of Christ the King,—this is a lie fathered in hell, a blasphemy against the very Godhead, and a wild rushing into the bottomless pit of everlasting reprobation.

To conclude, then, the Church of Christ the Lord was founded by Him to last unchanged through all the ages of this old earth of ours until the day when He will come in great power and majesty to judge the living and the dead. He promised that this would be so; and His promise cannot fail, for it stands on the unshakable foundation of divine fidelity. Somewhere in this world that Church of His lives on, doing the work which He gave it to do: somewhere it teaches and sanctifies and rules the children of the Kingdom. It is not an unorganized aggregation of disunited fragments: it is an organized unity without a peer, without a like. It is one and alone, though many

counterfeits try to take its place of holy honor. It is also necessary for men in order to reach their eternal happiness in the mansions of God. Without limiting the extent of the operations of God's mysterious providence for individual souls, it remains true that His general and ordinary economy of salvation requires that all men be members of this one, perpetual, necessary Church.

As a consequence it is of supreme importance to everyone to know and recognize this Church, which is the way to heaven. If we are its members (and thank God! we Catholics are), we should cling to it with love and loyalty and with lives that tally with our profession. Those who are not yet within it must come to it. Christ is "the Way and the Truth and the Life":[1] so too in participated measure is His Church. The feet of strong desire must be ready to tread this way; the eyes of the mind must be opened to see this truth; the arms of the soul must be stretched wide to clasp this life in thrilling love to the centre of the heart's embrace.

In the next lecture we shall begin the con-

[1] John XIV, 6.

sideration of the truths which will lead us without error to this indispensable knowledge. For the present let us appreciate with grateful souls the unlimited love of the King which moved Him to give to His Kingdom these sacred prerogatives, which are hers and hers alone, as she carries on the work of Him who "having loved His own who were in the world, loved them unto the end." [1]

[1] John XIII, 1.

LECTURE IV

THE PRIMATE OF THE KINGDOM

One way to find Church. Primacy: of honor: of jurisdiction. Peter's place among the Twelve. Incomprehensible without primacy. Christ's promise. Words to Peter alone. Contents of promise: foundation: key-bearer. Conferring of primacy. An evasion. Primacy perpetual. Involves infallibility. True and false meanings. Where is Peter? Not in Protestant or Greek churches. Is in Catholic Church alone. Conclusion.

We have reached the point of greatest interest and of highest importance in our considerations. For now we come to the very source of energy in the institution of Christ: we touch the very heart of the plan of our blessed Lord with regard to the Kingdom which He founded on earth. The interest that attached to our preceding reflections was great indeed, quite apart from the merits or demerits of presentation,—and this because of the vital bearing of it all upon each of us individually. In humble reverence and yearning love we have studied what the

Master did, as He made provision for the preservation and propagation of His revelation and religion throughout all ages unto the consummation of the world.

With sincere docility and singleness of purpose to seize upon what Christ actually did, not upon what He might have done or on what misguided wise (?) ones have said that He did, we have understood that He founded His Kingdom. He instituted His Church with the threefold power of teaching mankind with infallible authority, of sanctifying men with the religious rites left by Himself, and of ruling the souls of the children of the Kingdom in the ways of faith and holiness. Christ's Church is not a man-made organization, evolved by human ingenuity from the religious impulse given by Him and rounded out by the influence of philosophic thought and political power. It is a divine institution, founded as a true and independent society by Christ the legate of God, aye, God Himself.

We have furthermore understood in the light of truth that Christ made His Church for all time, to live on through all the years

of this old world of ours, doing His work of love until the last of the children of God has been brought to the Father through its ministrations. One and alone it stands as His unique masterpiece, without peer or rival: for the King did not found many kingdoms; the Christ did not institute many churches, but one Kingdom, one Church. And this one, perpetual Kingdom, which is His Church, is necessary for all mankind, in order that they may come to the eternal happiness which the love of God has placed as their everlasting destiny. The folly of dogmatic toleration and the arrogance of indifferentism are blasphemies against the Most High God.

It is, then, of supreme importance to all to know where this one, true, obligatory Church of Christ the King is: for those who are its members, that they may ever more loyally appreciate the blessed privilege that is theirs; for those who do not yet belong to its saving communion, that they may come unto the Christ in His Church, until there shall be but one fold and one shepherd.

So, we are to look still closer at the consti-

tution of the Kingdom, at the make-up of the Church of the Master; and from this consideration, under the helping grace of God, we shall get clearer light to mark out the path of sure knowledge as to what and where this Church of Christ is. In the next lecture, upon "The Seal of the King's Signet," we shall learn from the Christ what marks He stamped upon His Church to distinguish it from counterfeits. But before we come to that consideration we can already find Christ's single masterpiece from the truth which shines forth from the Church as builded by the Master. The subject of our present study, then, is "The Primate of the Kingdom."

Now Peter was that primate. When we studied the Great Charter of the Kingdom and the constitution of the Church of the Master, we saw that Christ gave to the Apostolic Body the power of teaching and ruling men. They had, and would have forever, this God-given power for the work committed to them. But, whilst all the Apostles were thus commissioned by the Master, was their power equal in every respect? Was

there no difference between them? Or was there a real primacy established by the Christ? Primacy, of course, means some preeminence and superiority, and may be of different kinds. But the primacy of which we speak is preeminence not merely in regard to some outward deference or consideration for reasons of personal worth or age or such like titles: it is the primacy of jurisdiction, which means superiority over others by reason of supreme authority. And we ask, was there a primacy of jurisdiction in the Apostolic College in such a way that all, faithful and superiors alike, were subject to the supreme ruling power in the hands of one?

The answer, as gathered from the words of the divine founder of the Christian Church, is that there was; that Peter was the supreme ruler over all the members of the Church; that Peter by his jurisdictional preeminence was at the head of the earthly Kingdom instituted by Christ the King. But let us look at the matter carefully and humbly; for it is a question whose importance cannot be exaggerated,—this question

of the Petrine claims. We say that Peter was the one to whom Christ after His mortal career left His own place; the one who was made the vicegerent of Christ Himself; the one whose sway extended not only to each of the faithful from the highest to the lowest, but to each of the members of the Apostolic Body. We say that in their teaching and ruling authority the Twelve had a head,—and that the head was Peter.

First of all, before trying to grasp in all its force the argument derived from the promises and actual gift made by Christ, let us look upon the position of Peter among the Twelve, as shown to us by the writings of the New Testament. There is something very significant in the very first meeting of Peter with the Master, to whom Andrew had brought him with the soul-stirring words, "We have found the Messias." For "Jesus looking upon him said: Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted, Peter,"[1] the Rock. Thus Christ either gave, or promised to give him,

[1] John I, 41, 42.

a special name,—a name, by which, so far as we know, never before had man been called. And this He did to no one else. Christ, did indeed, call John and James "the sons of thunder," as He called Herod "the fox"; but He did not change their names. Yet Simon's name was changed to Peter. And it is worthy of note, that in His previous dealings with the race whenever God changed a man's name, the change was indicative of the functions of that man in the designs of God. This we see, for instance, in the case of Abraham [1] and Israel,[2] who were Abram and Jacob until God changed their names.

Peter is always among those to whom special honor is shown by Christ. For he is one of the three to witness the glory of the Transfiguration [3] and the crushing sorrow of the Master's agony.[4] Especial consideration is always shown to him: for him and the Christ the tribute is paid;[5] from his

[1] Gen. XVII, 5.
[2] Gen. XXXII, 28.
[3] Matt. XVII, 1.
[4] Matt. XXVI, 37.
[5] Matt. XVII, 26.

ship the Master teaches the crowds;[1] to him of all the Apostles the risen Lord first manifests Himself in the glory of His triumph.[2]

During the public life of Christ it is always Peter whom Christ addresses in particular: it is Peter who answers first either in the name of the others[3] or in his own name.[4] And after the departure of Christ it is still the same. Peter takes the lead, when the place of the traitor Judas is to be filled:[5] in the name of all he preaches the first Apostolic sermon on the day of Pentecost:[6] he stands forth from the rest by the priority and magnificence of the miracles wrought in confirmation of Christian truth:[7] he admits the Gentiles into the Church:[8] he leads the first Apostolic Council in Jerusalem:[9] it is to see him that Paul journeys to the Holy City.[10]

1 Luke V, 3.
2 Luke XXIV, 34.
3 Matt. XIX, 27; John VI, 69.
4 Matt. XVI, 16; John XXI, 15.
5 Acts I, 15.
6 Acts II, 14 ff.
7 Acts III, 7; V, 15.
8 Acts X.
9 Acts XV, 7 ff.
10 Gal. I, 18.

The New Testament writings give his name the place of honor. They speak of "Simon and those that were with him." [1] Thirty times do they mention him with the others,—and always in the place of honor, save in a single instance [2] which is not a real exception. Peter is referred to as "the first." [3] Yet he is not first in the Master's love, for John was "the disciple whom Jesus loved"; [4] not first in priority of vocation, for others, Andrew and John, were before him there; not first by reason of greater age, for of this no probable proof exists. Still, he is "the first." Does all this mean nothing? Does it mean only a vague precedence or a primacy of mere honor? Far from it. He is the chief one among the Twelve: and this position is easily understood in view of Christ's clear words telling of the primacy of authority; but it is all quite unintelligible, if we reject the unique elevation of him who was to bear the name of Peter, the Rock.

Mindful of this position of Simon, let us

[1] Mark I, 36; Luke VIII, 45.
[2] Gal. II, 9.
[3] Matt. X, 2.
[4] John XXI, 20.

turn to the scene at Cæsarea Philippi towards the close of the Savior's Galilean ministry. In St. Matthew we have the happening painted for us in words simple with the sincerity of truth, sublime with the grandeur of divine beneficence. "And Jesus . . . asked of His disciples saying: Who do men say that the Son of Man is? But they said: Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering said to him: Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsover thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also

in heaven."[1] There is the glorious promise of the Christ, whose words shall not pass away, though heaven and earth shall pass away. "And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church. . . . And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven" on earth.

First of all we note that these words are addressed to Peter and to Peter alone, to whom, according to the expression of Christ Jesus, the heavenly Father had made a special revelation, not vouchsafed to the other Apostles. Other promises were made to the Twelve, but to them with Peter and because of his relation to them; yet to none of the others, nor to all of them, were ever spoken the words which fell from the lips of the God-man upon this most solemn occasion. The evangelist says that it was to Peter that Christ spoke; and Christ's words confirm this beyond question, for they singled out Peter and distinguished him from all the rest. As Bellarmine has well remarked, if Christ had chosen to imitate the

[1] Matt. XVI, 13–17.

form of legal documents with their great particularity of description, He could not have been more precise. For He calls Simon by his ordinary name; He adds the name of his father; He continues with the special name of His own divine giving. "Blessed art thou Simon—Bar-Jona (son of John)—thou art Peter." He addresses him apart from all the others. "Blessed art *thou*—*thou* art Peter, and upon *this* rock I will build my Church—I will give to *thee* the keys of the kingdom." Once more, whatever was at any time given to the other Apostles was also given to Peter, who was part of the Apostolic Body; but what is here promised to Peter was never promised to any of the other Apostles.

Now in these splendid words of Christ there is a twofold promise made to Peter alone; and both promises pledge to him the primacy of jurisdiction over the souls of men in the Church of Christ the King. For on the one hand Peter was to be the foundation of Christ's Church, and on the other he was to be the key-bearer of Christ's Kingdom upon earth.

Peter, the foundation of Christ's Church! "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church." We cannot grasp the full force of the words of Christ in the English translation of what He said. In the language in which Christ spoke the two parts of the sentence contained identically the same word, Peter and the rock being quite the same word, Cephas or Kepha. "Thou art the Rock," said Christ, "and upon this rock I will build my Church." Peter was the rock: not Christ Himself, except in so far as He took Peter to a participation of His own transcendent preeminence: not the faith of Peter; for both of these strained interpretations of Christ's clear statement are against the obvious meaning of the words in themselves and in their context. Peter in his individual personality, as distinct from the others, was to be the rock on which Christ would build His Church. Can we help thinking of those other words of Christ, recorded by St. Matthew, when the Master spoke of the wise man "who built his house upon the rock"? "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and they

beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock."[1] Yes, Christ was that wise one: He would build His Church upon the rock, upon Peter, and therefore the gates of hell would never prevail against it.

As the solid rock-foundation of the Church of Christ, Peter was to be for that Church what the foundation is for the building, the principle of unity and stability and permanence. Now the Church according to the will of Christ is a true society; and therefore Peter could be all this only by what is the principle of unity and stability and permanence in such a society,—namely, by the possession of authority over all who would form part of that Church, by the teaching power reaching out to all, by the ruling power embracing each and every one of the members of Christ's organized society. Only by jurisdictional primacy over all, pastors and faithful alike, could he effectively procure the unity and stability and permanence of the house of God: only by his su-

[1] Matt. VII, 25.

preme authority could he be the foundation-rock of Christ's Church.

Furthermore, Christ promised that He would give to Peter "the keys of the kingdom of heaven"; and that means the pledge of supreme power in His Church. "The keys of the kingdom of heaven" refers to that Kingdom in its earthly stage, which is the Church itself to be built on Peter; for in the glorious Kingdom of heavenly joy there would be no place for the jurisdictional power of the keys, as there would be no binding and loosing.

In the promise of "the keys of the kingdom" Christ used a well known symbol to signify the supreme authority, which He promised to give to Peter. In olden days the keys of a besieged city were handed over to the conqueror in token of his sovereign right over all within the walls. A relic of the same symbol remains with us. The last sign of dominion over the house is the transfer to the tenant or buyer of the keys of the same: and again when we wish to honor some one with particular civic honor, we

hand him the keys of the city, as a sign that whilst he is in our midst he is the ruler of the commonwealth. These are but relics. But among the ancients, and especially among the people of the East, the transfer of the keys had a very definite significance. If a subject people gave the keys to some one, by this transfer they testified their entire subjection to him to whom they rendered up the keys. If a sovereign gave the keys to an inferior, he typified the transfer to him of his own sovereign authority; and if he gave the keys of the kingdom to but one, it meant that to this one was given the supreme right of ruling over all in the name of the king. Consequently, when Christ, the King of the Kingdom, promises to give to Peter alone the keys of His Kingdom on earth, He pledges Himself to confer on Peter the supreme ruling power in His Church.

In view of all this we can well understand the force of the other words of Christ to the same favored Apostle, when He told him that Satan had desired to bring all the Master's chosen ones to the final ruin of their work, but that He would frustrate the plans

of the Evil One through the ministry of Peter. "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted confirm thy brethren."[1] It was by the supreme power in Peter's keeping, reaching out to all, even to the members of the Apostolic College, that Christ would bring to a triumphant issue the work of His loved ones.

So, here is the promise of "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior." Even if we did not know when or where He made good His promise, we should have no cause for doubt or apprehension; because what God had pledged His word to do, would somewhere and sometime and somehow be accomplished. However, we are not left even to this necessity of concluding that Christ must have done what He promised to do. We have the record of the actual conferring upon Peter of the power which was promised to him at Cæsarea Philippi.

The days of the Passion had come and gone. In the triumph of the resurrection Christ had entered into His glory and for

[1] Luke XXII, 32.

many days had manifested Himself to His Apostles, strengthening them and speaking to them of their work in His Kingdom. And now the climax of His benedictions! All through the watches of the night seven of the Apostles under the lead of Simon Peter had labored in their craft of fishermen, and had caught nothing. As morning drew near, they saw walking on the shore the majestic figure of one who spoke to them and gave them directions to cast to the right of the ship with the assurance that they would find. They obeyed; and there followed the marvelous draft of fishes, which recalled the time when Christ had first called them to be fishers of men. Peter flung himself overboard, as soon as the clear-sighted John had assured him that it was the Lord: the others came to the shore in the boats, dragging their nets.

And there by the side of the Sea of Tiberias, as the morning sun from across the lake was lighting up the gray hills of Galilee, the Christ and His loved ones were in sweet converse, just as if the horrors of the Passion had never broken the peace of their fellow-

ship. Then whilst the looks of the wondering Apostles centred themselves upon Christ and Peter, "Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee."[1] Ah, Peter had well learned his lesson of humility. Before, in face of the warning of Christ, he had preferred himself to all the rest, when there was question of loyal devotedness to the Master, and had said: "Although all shall be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized."[2] "I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death."[3] Yet later he had ended by cursing and swearing that he "knew not the man." Yes, he had learned: and now he threw himself upon the love of the merciful Lord, as he said: "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He saith to him the third

[1] John XXI, 15 ff.
[2] Matt. XXVI, 33.
[3] Luke XXII, 33.

time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because He had said to him the third time, Lovest thou me?" Didn't He know? Was it another warning of a future unfaithfulness? Day was just dawning: perhaps from the distance came the crow of a cock, recalling the warning of the sad days gone by. Could it be that the Master foresaw another act of treasonable weakness? God keep him from that! So committing himself to the love of the Christ, he humbly said: "Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee." "Feed my sheep." And thus the Christ fulfilled the promise given at Cæsarea Philippi, and made Peter the shepherd of His whole flock. That, as we know, means the supreme teaching and ruling power over all those who were to look to Christ as the Good Shepherd of their souls.

From ancient usage, profane as well as sacred, the office of shepherding a people meant the kingly office of supreme rule. The whole flock of Christ, undershepherds as well as the sheep and the lambs of the flock, were committed to the care of Peter,

who was to take the place of Christ in their midst. His was the sovereign power that belongs to kings; his the supreme jurisdiction of the ruler of the Kingdom of God on earth; his the primacy of governing sway over the Church of Christ.

It is a futile evasion on the part of some of our separated brethren to refer these words of Christ to the restoration to Peter of the apostleship, which he is said to have lost by his mean denial of the Master. Peter did indeed deserve to lose apostleship, love, consideration,—everything, as the result of his base desertion of the Lord. But it is asserted without the slightest foundation of proof that he did lose the dignity of one of the chosen ones of the Master: and even if he had lost it, it would have been restored to him on the first Easter day, as Christ said to Peter with the rest: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." [1]

The words of appointment as shepherd of the fold stand forth clear and unmistakable: the words of promise and the words of fulfillment are as the voice and the echo of the

[1] John XX, 21.

voice of the "Word made flesh." They made Peter the earthly head of the Church that Christ was leaving in His visible presence: they constituted him the King's vicegerent over the Kingdom of God, which is the Church of Christ,—supreme in the teaching and ruling power over the faithful and over the very Apostles themselves, divinely appointed though these were.

And besides, this primacy of Peter was to continue unto the end of time, "all days even to the consummation of the world." This perpetuity of the primacy is of an importance that cannot be exaggerated. Many of the adversaries of the truths which we have been considering, have been forced by their fixed prejudices to deny the genuineness of the texts of Matthew and John, or, granting the genuineness of the evangelists' words, to deny that they represent the truth of actual historical happenings. It is a vain attempt which we need not follow up here, based as it is on absolutely no sound critical reason and leading logically to the rejection of all scientific historical knowledge. Others again whose preconceived notions will not

allow them to admit Peter's real position in the undying Church of Christ, persuade themselves that, though the primacy was indeed bestowed upon Peter, it was a gift so personal, that it was to pass away with him and was not to be sent down to the ages that were to come as an essential part of the institution of Christ Jesus in the constitution of the Church.

But the primacy was not a gift that was personal in this sense. True, as Peter's faith may be said to have been the reason of the promise, so his love may be looked upon as the ground of the gift of the primacy to him, rather than to Andrew or Philip or James or John or any other of the Twelve. But the reason of the gift to anyone at all is to be sought in the love of the Master and in His wise purpose to guarantee the permanent stability of His Church by this means rather than by any other.

His Church was to last until the end of time, unchanged in all that He made essential to it; and the most essential of these essentials was the place of supreme jurisdiction given to Peter. Would the house of

God stand firm unto the end, as Christ said it would? Then must the foundation-stone be there forever,—and Peter is this rock. Would the Church of the Master live on, unshaken by the attacks of the gates of hell till time should be no more? That was the pledge of the King: and the pledge would be made good precisely because the Church was built on Peter, who must remain forever. Would the lambs and the sheep of the flock of the Good Shepherd be guarded and guided and led to safe pastures and fed with nourishing food until the final separation of the good from the bad? The Savior said that it would be so; He left Peter to shepherd the whole flock until the day of consummation: —and so to the end he must be at the head of the flock with supreme pastoral authority.

Peter, the fisherman, the son of John, was to pay the debt of nature: glorified with his perfect following of the Master, he was to pass through the gates of death from the blood-stained cross. But Peter, the primate of the Kingdom of the King, the vicegerent of Christ the Lord, was to live forever in his successors unto the end, supreme in jurisdic-

tion, supreme in teaching power for the guarding of the truth.

Yes, Peter's perpetual primacy means also Peter's unending infallibility. This infallibility of Christ's vicar upon earth does not mean that he can do no evil or that he is free from the possibility of even monstrous sins: it does not mean that he is omniscient or that he receives forever the inspiration of the Spirit of God: it does not mean that he has a power of miracles which might stagger the imagination. No; but it does mean that, whenever through the lapse of the centuries Peter speaks to all the Church of Christ as supreme teacher and ruler and with the plenitude of his apostolic power demands the unconditioned assent of the faithful to the revelation of God, he is through the unfailing promise of Christ and by the assistance of the Holy Ghost preserved from the possibility of error.

So, because the words of Christ cannot fail, somewhere in this old world of ours Peter is ruling and teaching the Church of Christ: somewhere he is sustaining on the rock-foundation the house of God that will

never fall: somewhere he is holding the keys of the Kingdom: somewhere he is feeding the flock of Christ. Where is he? Where is the undying Peter?

The question is of the highest moment to all. There is but one Church of Christ, to which all men are bound to come; but one Church living forever and holding the means of God's ordinary providence for the salvation of the world. Wherever it is, Peter is at its head; for the Christ placed him there to rule it all days even to the consummation of the world. In view of this we can grasp the worth of our considerations with regard to Peter's divinely established position in the Church of God.

Those too who do not hold with us recognize this importance; but they are fixed in their claim by the vision of what must follow, if Peter's place as perpetual primate of the Kingdom is acknowledged. When he was still outside the Catholic Church, the well known Thomas W. Allies said: "The whole question reduces itself to this, whether the primacy of the Pope, as it is claimed today, is of divine institution or not," that is,

whether Christ made Peter the perpetual primate of His Kingdom or not, and we have seen that he did: "if it is of divine institution, there is but one thing left for us to do under penalty of eternal damnation, namely, to submit to the Roman Pontiff."

And the conclusion is valid; because nowhere but in the Catholic Church can we find Peter ruling the flock of the Lord. The Roman Pontiff and he alone is the successor of Peter in the primacy of the Kingdom: and as a consequence either Christ's Church has perished from the earth (and to say that is to call Christ a liar and to be guilty of blasphemy), or the Catholic Church is the one and only true Church of Christ. Let us mark this well: nowhere in God's world outside of the Catholic Church is there a religious body which claims to hold Peter's primacy with its final, absolute, infallible teaching power and supreme ruling power in the hands of one; and the Catholic Church does claim, and has always claimed this succession for its Supreme Pontiff.

I say, no religious body other than the Catholic Church claims the succession of

Peter. Many of them, in fact, deny that the blessed Redeemer established any society at all. Others deny the place of the body of bishops as of divine origin in the constitution of Christ's Church; and such as these cannot and do not claim to have succession from him, who by the will of the Master was the bishop of bishops. And among the religious bodies which hold to episcopal succession in the Church of Christ, there is not one which proclaims itself to be under the sway of him who stands in Peter's place. Many of the episcopal churches deny the primacy of Peter himself: others, seeing that they cannot reject his primacy, will not admit that this supreme jurisdiction was to go on "all days even to the consummation of the world." Only once through all the centuries that have passed has anyone save the Roman Pontiff dared to claim for himself this sacred eminence of absolute sway in the things which touch the Christian life. That was when Photius in the ninth century, led on by pride of place, was hardy enough to claim to hold from Peter, because he was the bishop of Constantinople, the New Rome to

which the head of the Empire had been transferred.

In face of this contention, if seriously put forward, there would be need of more intimate examination of the titles on which the claim was based. But even that examination is not rigorously demanded now. For now no one claims the place of Peter; and therefore no one holds the place of Peter, outside of the Church, which is called Catholic, or, by way of description, Roman Catholic. Now if Christ made Peter the perpetual primate of His Kingdom,—and we have seen that He did; and if Peter must have a successor in his place until the end of time,—and he must; and if that successor is as a consequence actually ruling the one true Church of Christ in the world,—and he is; and if none of the Christian bodies, other than the Catholic Church, even claim to have that successor of Peter at their head,—and they do not: then it follows as the night the day that they are not the true Church of Christ, and that therefore the Catholic Church is His true Church.

Whilst they do not claim the primacy, the

Catholic Church claims and has always claimed the succession of Peter: through the living Peter she has exercised supreme jurisdiction from the earliest days. In the years of the Apostles' ministration, in the time of special manifestation of heavenly wonders in the primitive Church, there was not so much need for the actual exercise of the prerogative of Peter; but when the need arose, the consciousness of the power, which had forever abode within the breast of the Church of Christ, spoke forth in unmistakable terms and was hearkened to by the Christian world.

The Pope has always ruled as the successor of Peter; and the line runs back unbroken from Benedict XV to Peter, who held from Christ. Benedict XV, Pius X, Leo XIII, Pius IX, Gregory XVI, Pius VIII, Leo XII, Pius VII,—and back of that, as the non-Catholic Macaulay puts it, "we trace the line in an unbroken series from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time

of Pepin the august dynasty extends, until it is lost in the twilight of fable." (Had he said, "the twilight of history," he had told the truth.) He continues: "She saw the commencement of all the governments and all the ecclesiastical institutions that now exist in the world, and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon set foot in Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Greek eloquence still flourished in Antioch, when idols were still worshiped in the temple at Mecca. And she may still exist" (nay, we say with complete certainty, she will exist, if the world lasts so long), "when some traveler from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand upon a broken arch of London bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's." [1]

All through the ages Rome has taught the world: all through the ages she has ruled the Church of Christ; for her head, the Pope, spoke with the voice of Peter,—nay, he was

[1] Macaulay. Essay on *Von Ranke*.

Peter, living on in deathless life until the coming of the Master at the end of human things.

There, then, is the blessed truth, big with consequences. The King made Peter the primate of His Kingdom, with the power of teaching with infallible voice and of ruling with supreme sway the souls of all the children of the Kingdom until time shall be no more. Because the divine King must be true to His pledged word, that hallowed Church of His must be and is somewhere in the world; and at its head, doing the work of the shepherd of the whole flock, stands Peter, undying in his exercise of sovereign power. He is the visible head of that one true Church, which is necessary to all men in order that they may come to the joys of eternal life. And that Peter today is the Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church, the white-robed shepherd of Christ's flock, who from the imprisonment of the Vatican extends his fatherly rule over the whole Christian world. Where he is, there and there only is Christ's true Church.

Before the whole world that Church of

Christ, which is none other than the Catholic Church, stands forth at the right hand of the King as the glorious queen, glowing with splendor, surrounded with the variety of wondrous adornment,—the queen sublime in her majesty and her heavenly power. But through the glory of the queen there shines the tenderness of the mother. From the depths of her eyes, regal in their magnificence, there gleams the love-light of the best of friends and the charm of the yearning affection of Christ's Bride. She has brought forth to her Spouse the children of God, who had been but the sons and daughters of men: she holds them fast to her throbbing heart and keeps them safe from the attacks, which would wrest them from the sway of Him who died that they might live.

Oh, may we who have the unspeakable happiness and honor of being the children of that Church prize this blessed privilege above all the treasures of earth! And may those who know her not and in their ignorance look upon her with indifference, if not with undisguised hatred, come to see in her the Mother who loves them, and may they

fly to the protection of her sheltering arms! They will find Christ with her; and they will find her, where they find the Roman Pontiff, who as Peter's successor is the primate of the Kingdom.

LECTURE V

THE SEAL OF THE KING'S SIGNET

Another viewpoint. Warning as to controversial purpose. A parable and its application. Two tests. The moral norm. Sanctity. Its meaning and grades. Is a note. Not found in non-Catholic churches. Their principles and practice. Holiness of Catholic Church. The juridical criterion: apostolicity with unity in catholicity. Christ's will. Application: non-hierarchical Protestant churches: Episcopal churches: Greek churches. Catholic Church. Same conclusion.

In our reflections about the primacy of Peter we looked into the very heart of the Church established by Christ. He built that Church upon Peter, the Rock: He gave to him the keys of His Kingdom on earth: He made the humble Galilean fisherman the shepherd of His flock, the primate of His Kingdom until the end of time. From this knowledge of what the Master did we were already enabled to find where His true Church is, and to see that it is the Roman Catholic Church alone, since only in this Church is found the supreme rule of Peter.

Still, though the matter is already settled, let us look at the same thing from another viewpoint. Without directly referring to the primacy of Peter, let us examine the subject from another angle and see in another way where one is to find the only true Church of Christ, which all men are bound to enter as they value their immortal souls. May God grant that from this consideration those of us who are of the dear old Church may love her more generously and cling to her more loyally; and that those who have not seen her in the beauty, which is hers by the gift of the King, may recognize her at last and come to the motherly arms stretched out to clasp them to her great heart!

The study is of necessity a controversial one; and I do not like controversy. I do not like it, because in it one is forced to say things which, though uttered in the fulness of charity, may wound some hearts, and may unwittingly cause some of the bitterness that may wrap one up in self and keep him from following after the truth. Let me premise right at the outset that I do not intend to

hurt any sincere soul; that I speak, as the Apostle of the Gentiles spoke, because "the charity of Christ presseth me,"[1] and because I too, though in a lesser way, may say with the same Apostle, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel."[2] If one may exclaim in all honesty of purpose, "Let justice be done, though the heavens fall," surely we may say with sincere charity, "Let the truth be known, though bleeding hearts repine," the more so as this truth is necessary for the well-being of even those who are pained.

Let me begin with a little story or parable. There was once a great king who loved his people well. For them he thought; for them he labored; for them he fought; for them he was prepared to die. And it came to pass that the king had to go upon a journey into a far off country, where for long he would be kept from the people of his heart's love. During his absence his people were to spread out over the earth, and as they advanced they were to carry with them the blessings of the king's sway.

[1] II. Cor. V, 14.
[2] I. Cor. IX, 16.

So, before his departure the king called his people together and gave them his words of love and counsel; and he appointed over them those who would hold his place and would do for them even as he had been doing through the glad days of his sojourning among them. "Look you," he said, "people of my heart's love! To those who are to rule in my name and with my power I will give a talisman that bears the mark which all may read. When you shall find this sign stamped upon their credentials, know that they are mine, and render unto them the love and obedience which you hold for me. And the sign? Behold the sign!" Then he took from his finger the signet-ring, which gleamed thereon, and he stamped with its seal the sign which all were to recognize as the mark of his sending. This seal gave he to each and all, that they might discern his messengers from those who without his sending would pose in a false authority. "Look to the seal of my signet! Compare the credentials of those who claim your allegiance with the image stamped with the seal of my signet. Thus shall you know who

are from me and who are impostors." And the king departed from their midst.

Years passed; and many came to his people and claimed to be the envoys of the king. But those who were wise unmasked the pretenders by the image stamped by the signet of the king: and others through their folly were led away to cleave to false leaders: and other some would not make use of the sign of the king, nor would they admit the power of the validly authorized messengers of their lord. But some day the king would return and demand a reckoning from all for the years of their service. Then would he give to each according to his merit: to the faithful, honor and glory; to the foolish, rejection; to the obstinate, the casting out from his kingdom unto the end of days.

This parable is so plain as scarcely to mask the reality. Christ is the King forever and forever: He went unto the glory of the Father, leaving behind Him those who were to carry on His mission: He established His Church, which was to bring men to the everlasting joys of His Father's home. With the signet-ring of His royal sway He

stamped upon that Church the marks which were to proclaim her as His very own. The sign which He stamped with His signet He made known to all His dear ones, and told all to compare the credentials with the sign which they knew. Thus they would be able to distinguish the true from the false: thus they would know which was His one, true, necessary Church, that they might embrace it and cling to it forever.

Let us look at this "Seal of the King's Signet": let us see what His Church must be; and with all this before our eyes let us examine the credentials of the rival claimants to our allegiance. There are two parts to the image of the seal; the one affording a moral test; the other, a juridical criterion of the true Church of Christ. I call the first a moral test, because it has to do with virtue and moral uprightness: I name the other a juridical criterion, since it is concerned with jurisdiction and the right of ruling. The first is the mark of sanctity; the second is the note of Apostolic succession, proved legitimate by catholic unity.

To begin with, let us reflect on the note of

sanctity, that peculiar quality essential to the Church of the Master and leading one to the recognition of that Church as the veritable handiwork of the King. Sanctity means union with God or likeness to God, who is absolute uprightness and holiness infinite. Inanimate things are holy by reason of their being set aside for special union with God or godly rites. Thus a chalice is holy or a church edifice is holy, as being officially dedicated to the honor of the Most High. Human beings are holy by their union with God through knowledge and love. As we know from God's revelation, in this order of divine providence men are knitted unto God by faith and hope and charity, and by the sanctifying grace which makes them God-like, brothers and sisters of the Christ, who is the first-born among many brethren.

There are various degrees of this holiness. There is ordinary exterior respectability and the fulfillment of the duties which go to make an honest, upright man, who pays his debts, is true to his friends, cares for his family,—and the like. Then there is a

higher holiness, which consists in victory over clamorous passions, in the constant tending to the heights of moral worth, in zeal for procuring the better things for oneself and for others. And finally at the very apex of human striving for the divine there is the heroic sanctity, which spends itself in love for God and man in the most difficult and unremitting sacrifice, even in actions from which poor weak nature shrinks back in horror.

Now, the holiness which Christ stamped upon the Church with His royal signet-ring is the transcendent holiness, which goes beyond the possibility of mere human power even when aided by God's ordinary supernatural helps and therefore calls for the special and extraordinary intervention of divine grace, and which as a testimony of God Himself marks out the Church as His own specially beloved, His one true Church forever. The ordinary honesty and uprightness of common virtue does not thus rise above the powers of nature, especially when nature is aided by the usual helps from God; and hence it is not to it that appeal is to be

made, when there is question of proving the credentials of Christ's legates. In certain generous souls higher holiness may not be beyond the reach of their earnest efforts, especially in isolated acts; nay, some souls of nobler calibre and in circumstances which appeal to the best instincts of a noble heart may rise to transitory acts of heroism in the cause of God. So, appeal is not made to this kind of sanctity. But the presence of this higher sanctity of self-abnegation and devotedness, found steadily and perseveringly in a great and notable number, and the presence of heroic sanctity in some souls; and the existence of all this in a constant and permanent manner, which exists in virtue of the doctrinal and sacramental principles of the Church that mothers them and which marks this holiness out as the social good of that Church,—this is something above the power of nature in itself and even when possessed of God's ordinary assistance. Then too this holiness may even be confirmed by miracles wrought by God; but whether so confirmed by physical miracles or not, it is in itself a moral miracle. It can

come only from God; and its splendor enables, nay, forces one to exclaim, "The finger of God is here."

This is the holiness which Christ established His Church to engender and foster: this is the moral seal stamped by the King's signet. Where we find this holiness, there and there only do we find the true Church of Christ. This statement must, of course, be proved; but the proof is not hard to find.

Can we doubt that Christ willed that His Church should bring forth these fruits of holiness from the tree of sacred doctrine and blessed sacramental rites that bear with them the strength of love divine? Surely not. We have only to hearken to the Master, when in the Gospel of the Kingdom He urges His own to the blessedness of humility, of chastity unsullied by stain even of thought, of entire devotedness to the Father who is in heaven. We have only to listen to Him, as He gives the invitation to the greater souls of His nobler followers to spurn the riches of earth for the treasures of heaven, to forego the sacred joys of family life for the martyr-like heroism of volun-

tary celibate chastity, to break the proud spirit of human independence by loyal submission to the yoke of obedience according to the evangelical counsels. We have only to open the ears of our hearts as He calls for a love, which will brave the horrors of death itself for loyalty to Him and for the spread of His Kingdom. With eyes opened wide by love we have only to look to the lesson which He gives, as He invites us to come after Him. Whither does He go? He goes forth upon His way of unresting weariness in search of the lost sheep; He travels the road of love, unrequited by the scornful ones who reject Him; and after the horrors of His agony and scourging and crowning, after the fainting bearing of His cross He reaches the rock of Calvary and offers His life in the excess of love.

And this holiness, which must follow upon the desires and prayers and sacrifices of the King, was to be a light[1] to the feet of the wanderer to lead him home. This transcendence of moral worth was to be like a city on the mountain side which could not

[1] Matt. V, 14.

be hid:[1] it was to be a sign which would show men that the Father had sent the Christ, and that the Christ had sent His own to continue His work.[2] Men would recognize this holiness in its acts, which would mount beyond the power of human endeavor and could not be explained by motives of human perversity, such as pride, ambition, and the like. They would recognize it without a long process of intricate thought, but by a concrete judgment which is almost a sort of moral intuition, like the clairvoyance of children.

This, then, is the seal of holiness which must be found stamped on the one true Church of the King. Where do we find it? In humility of heart and in honesty of vision that question must be answered. Where do we find it? Now, without the slightest touch of uncharitableness, without the faintest approach to the Pharisaical spirit of "I thank thee, Lord, I am not as other men," it must be said, since truth demands it, that it is found nowhere but in the Catholic

[1] Matt. V, 14–16.
[2] John XVII, 17–21.

Church, and that therefore by this moral test the Catholic Church is proved to be the one true Church of Christ, which all are bound to embrace.

The Protestant churches and the Oriental churches, called "orthodox," have it not. Heaven forbid that we should assert that they do not possess the ordinary virtue, which marks men out as honest, upright, sincere, estimable, honorable before God and man. What is more, in many of the members of these churches there are found permanent moral levels which are above common holiness; nay, there are found some who, helped by the grace which is never wanting to men of good will, may perform deeds of heroic moral worth in conditions and circumstances which appeal to the nobility of their lofty souls.

All this we admit. But we do not find this higher virtue in a great and striking number; and we seek in vain for the heroic sanctity in some of their children, in such a constant and continuous manifestation as is the outcome of the doctrinal principles and means of grace in the keeping of these

churches. As for the heroic sanctity of their members we look in vain for "saints," whose holiness has been established after most rigorous and searching examination. And the confirmation of this holiness by miracles, to which, though not of necessity, one might with full justice appeal, relying on the words of Christ that "signs shall follow those who believe"[1] in Him? They have no thought of appealing to such testimonies of heaven: nay, not a few look upon such miracles as beyond the limits of truth, if not beyond the field of possibility.

And as for the higher sanctity, which means the abnegation of some of the sweetest joys of life in the following of the evangelical counsels, where shall we find in these churches the legions and legions of religious men and women, vowed to the mystic life of contemplation or to the thousand forms of devoted service of man for the love of God? The very principles, from which the older forms of Protestantism sprang, by sheer force of necessity worked havoc with the very effort to rise above the commonplace in

[1] Mark XVI, 17.

the service of God. The doctrine of "faith without good works" passed like a destroying breath of poisonous wind across the souls of thousands, and left behind it the wreck of expiring love. Works of supererogation became useless, if not positively hurtful as tending to the exaltation of human pride: the following of the counsels of Christ in the religious life became a folly, if not a thing accursed: the practice of the highest virtues fell into disrepute.

Even the churches, which did not hold to this doctrine that is the death of noble striving for God, by their servile dependence upon the civil power were forced into a conflict against the higher life of religious observances. And today when some of the Protestant churches, like the Anglican communion, are making an effort to recall the nobility of the supreme sacrifice of all things for Christ; when they urge men to works that are not demanded except by the fervor of consuming love; in particular, when, as some are doing with wholehearted generosity, they try to bring in again the practice of the gospel invitation in the exercises of

"the life in religion," they are doing so in opposition to the principles which gave them birth, and in evident imitation of the Catholic Church.

So much for the Protestant churches. The Oriental churches? These churches have no "saints" whose sanctity stands forth from the acid test of searching examination. As for the life of the counsels, which was once their glory and which continued to thrive with considerable vitality for some time after their separation from Rome, this has withered like a shoot cut off from the parent stock. And with regard to their later state and their present condition, perhaps the best thing for us to do in the spirit of charity is to close the eyes and ears of the soul to the harrowing accounts of creditable witnesses as to the laxity and moral perversion of vast numbers of those who profess the higher life.

Once more, both the Protestant and Oriental churches have ordinary holiness with scattered instances of lives of higher sanctity and occasional deeds of heroic moral worth. But the transcendence of

holiness, stamped on His Church by the signet-ring of the King, they have not; and hence they are not His one true Church.

On the other hand,—we say it with all humility, though with loving reverence,—the Catholic Church has this mark of the King. True, many of her children are unworthy of their Mother and a scandal to their fellowmen. Yet this is not because of her teaching and because of her lack of moral uplifting power: it is in spite of all this. The dear Master foreknew and foretold this sad fact. He spoke of it with bitter sorrow of heart during the days of His mortal life, when He beheld the hardness of soul of many of the disciples and felt the sting of the treachery of the "devil" among the Twelve and grieved over the evil lives of many who would call Him King. The lives of such unworthy children stain His Church; but even with these stains she is splendid with the transcendent virtue which is the mark of the King's signet. The heaven-born holiness of her sacred doctrine and salutary laws, and the fulness of the streams of grace which flow from her sac-

ramental fountains have wrought their effect.

In her we see whole armies of souls, vowed to the higher life of the evangelical counsels, laboring with ardor kindled at the Heart of Christ, striving for the glory of God and for the betterment of mankind and for the care of all who suffer from any of the countless ills of humanity. In her we see the glorious ranks of the saints of God, with their sanctity established in its heroicity by the severest of tests, not to speak of the confirmation of heaven itself in God's miraculous testification to their exalted moral worth. We behold all this, not in sporadic manifestations or in isolated instances, but in a perpetual continuity which raises it above the possibility of mere human endeavor, above the attainment of nature with the common helps from above.

Nay, at the very period, at which, according to her enemies, the Church was corrupted and buried beneath foul heaps of moral degradation, we find her shining in a glory of holiness as great as any that the world has witnessed from the beginning.

The mere catalogue of the saints at the very time of the so-called Reformation is overwhelming in its length and its magnificence. An Ignatius Loyola with a heart like that of the Apostle of the Gentiles; a Francis Xavier who brought hundreds of thousands of infidels to the feet of the Master; a Charles Borromeo, the model of zealous, self-forgetful pastors of Christ's Church; an Aloysius, a Stanislaus, and a Berchmans, the flower of Christian youth and the patterns of unstained purity; a Theresa with the soul of a seraph, the zeal of an apostle, and the heroism of a martyr; a John of the Cross with the penitential spirit of John the Baptist and the contemplative union of love of Francis of Assisi! So too it was before that storm-tossed age: so it has been ever since: so it is today.

And all this is not in spite of the principles of the Church, but is the outgrowth of her doctrine and the fruit of her means of sanctification. Before this glory, which is greater than any that earth can attain; before this spiritual elevation of those who, bearing the weakness of our frail mortality,

rose to the heights of virtue humanly inaccessible, we must, if we do not close our eyes to the light of heaven as it streams upon us from their transfigured persons,—we must, I say, bow down with humble reverence and exclaim, "The finger of God is here."

This, then, is the moral test; and by the application of this one mark of the signet of the King the Catholic Church is proved to be the one true Church of Christ the Lord. But there is another mark, or combination of marks, stamped by the King upon His Church. As the preceding note of sanctity had to do with virtue, so this one has reference to authority or jurisdiction; and hence as the former was a moral test, this is a juridical criterion. I refer to apostolicity with the unity and catholicity which prove it to be legitimate.

After our former considerations it is hardly necessary to recur to the fact that Christ gave to the Twelve the power of ruling the Church with authoritative jurisdiction derived from Him, and that this power is to go on to the end of time. The Apostolic

College's fulness of priestly power unto the sanctification of souls was also to be without end. This, however, as being part of the mysterious force transmitted by the sacrament of Orders need not be considered now: and furthermore, the sacraments do not show where the Church is; the Church shows where the true sacraments are. The Twelve, then, were to have successors in the government of the Church through all the years. It is precisely this unbroken succession in Apostolic sway, which is the mark to which I am now referring.

It is part of Christ's will in regard to His Church that there be an unbroken line of spiritual rulers; that those who succeed take the place of those who have gone before to fulfill the same functions, and that they demand obedience from all by reason of the same title as did their predecessors, namely, the will of the Master. Without such a succession a church cannot be the Church of the Apostles, and hence cannot be the Church of Christ. First and foremost, of course, material continuity of succession is altogether necessary; yet this succession,

thus materially unbroken, must be proved to be legitimate. Now the legitimacy of succession is made certain by catholicity in unity, which as a moral miracle goes beyond the attainment of human power, and is the testimony of God's sanction guaranteeing that the succession holds the power given by Christ to the chosen Twelve.

To one who has grasped the intention of the blessed Lord it is as clear as the light of day that there must be unity in the Church of Christ. Unity of doctrine, unity of worship in its essential character, unity of government,—all these must be present in the Church which is truly the Master's. Faith itself is an internal thing which cannot be seen: even the profession of faith in detailed, explicit declaration of all and the same points of belief may be almost impossible of verification in a large community. But the unity, to which I refer as a thing essential to the Church of Christ and at the same time as something easily ascertained, consists in this, that all the faithful profess subjection to one authoritative teaching

body and to one ruling power of jurisdiction.

Now, with His royal signet-ring Christ stamped this mark upon His Church. For He instituted a teaching power to which all men were bound to submit in unrestricted dependence in all matters touching divine revelation: and hence He demanded that all the faithful should profess subjection to this one teaching power. And, let us note it well once more, the teaching power established by the Christ is an authoritative and obligatory one. It must have the right and the brave fidelity to duty to give a final and binding decision in matters within the sphere of its competence: nay, if it is Christ's teaching body, it must claim for itself the right of pronouncing on God's revelation with infallible voice which demands the unconditioned and absolute assent of the faithful. Moreover, to this teaching-body Christ gave jurisdiction over the souls of the faithful to lead them to their heavenly home; and as a consequence of this institution of Christ's the faithful must profess submission to this

one power of spiritual sway. All this is now quite familiar to us; for we studied it as we were considering the Great Charter of the Kingdom.

And furthermore, according to the will of its Founder, the Church of Christ is a society, which with this unity forever preserved must reach out to men and lands and nations in such a wide-spread diffusion that it must be called and must be "catholic" or universal. It was not to be confined within the limits of a country or a nation: it was to be world-wide. There would indeed always be some who would refuse to have part with Christ in His Kingdom; but He sent His own to the whole world, and by His power their work would have effect in a striking universality. "Teach ye all nations":[1] "Preach ye the gospel to every creature":[2] "You shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth."[3]

It follows from the institution of Christ that a church, which is only national, is not

[1] Matt. XXVIII, 19.
[2] Mark XVI, 15.
[3] Acts I, 8.

Christ's Church; it follows also that a church, which is dependent upon the civil power as an adjunct of the state, cannot be His Church; for in the last analysis such a church is by practical necessity merely national, and is not the perfect society which Christ founded to have unity in universality.

Here, then, we have the other mark stamped upon His Church by the signet of the King,—unbroken succession from the Apostles in the jurisdiction of teaching and ruling the souls of men, and this succession proved legitimate by the divine approbation, which is made manifest by the moral miracle of catholic unity and united catholicity. So, once again, let us examine the churches which claim to be His, and let us see by this note whether their credentials are such as to show forth the seal of the King.

Beginning with apostolicity of succession in the teaching office and ruling power instituted by Christ, we may first look at the churches which may be called the non-hierarchical or non-episcopal churches. Such are the Lutherans, Presbyterians,

Methodists, Baptists and the like. For the members of these churches I have nothing but the sincerest charity, and against them personally I do not utter a word of harshness or bitterness. But the truth must stand; and the truth is that these bodies do not even make a pretence to possess Apostolic succession in jurisdictional sway over the souls of men by the authority of Christ our Lord. For these churches do not admit that Christ instituted such a hierarchy. The authority of their ministers and "superintendents" is an authority of human quality. They make no claim to a divine commission from Christ; and hence to speak of them as possessing this Apostolic jurisdiction in unbroken continuity from the Twelve would be almost an impertinence. Yet by the ordinance of the King they must have this unbroken succession, or they cannot be the Church instituted by the Master.

If we look at the churches which hold to the divinely instituted power of the episcopacy, as do the Episcopalian and Anglican churches, we cannot find among them anything more than the faintest shadow of this

unbroken succession from Christ's Apostles. They do indeed claim that their bishops hold the place of the Apostles: yet it is a case not of succession, but of rebellion. That one may be the successor of another it is necessary that he be substituted in the place of the other to fulfill the same functions and by reason of the same principle of authority.

Now, if we look at these churches, we see that they have essentially modified the notion of episcopal ministration and the principle of their accession to power. I am not speaking of the "power of orders": that is too recondite to allow of a hurried judgment. I am speaking of the power of jurisdiction. And in this regard there has been in these churches, not a substitution, but a revolution. The bishops prior to the so-called Reformation exercised their power of jurisdiction as the successors of the Apostles and in virtue of the authority committed to them by Christ without the mediation of any civil authority. Since the time of the Reformation the bishops in the English Church perform their episcopal functions as

the spiritual delegates of the State and in virtue of powers committed to them by the civil authorities. In Norway, Sweden, and Denmark there are churches which are Episcopal after a fashion: at least there are officials who are called bishops. Still as these churches are Lutheran in their origin and tenets, they cannot logically defend the position of their bishops as of divine institution: and besides, these churches, as being entirely national and of but very limited extension, may be passed by without any further consideration. In the United States too, where the bishops of the Anglican Church claim some shadowy union of charity with Canterbury, there are Episcopal churches. However, these are at best but parts or offshoots of the Church of England, and even if they do not necessarily stand if it stands, they must fall if it falls. And that church falls; for the bishops of the Church of England do not succeed in virtue of the same principle of authority as their predecessors; and therefore the Reformation of the sixteenth century was not a succession or a substitution; it was a

revolution and a rebellion. As a consequence the Protestant Episcopal bodies have not an unbroken line of succession from the Apostles, even if that succession be considered in its material continuity and apart from the notion of its legitimacy.

Yet, although they had this material succession (which they have not), it would not be a legitimate succession in their case any more than it is in the case of the Oriental churches called "orthodox." These latter have indeed this succession in its material continuity: but they together with the Protestant Episcopal churches are proved to be illegitimate claimants by the lack of the marks of unity and catholicity.

The Church of Christ must preach the doctrines of the Master, which are so much against the weakness of fallen human nature and so much opposed to man's ingrained love of independent activity, and she relies on spiritual and moral means for guarding subjection to her sway. As has been remarked before, the fact of the universal, yet unified expansion of such a Christian body is a thing that goes beyond the attain-

ment of human means and calls for the extraordinary intervention of divine power; and the moral miracle of this divine intervention testifies to the legitimacy of succession, wherever it is found. Now, this unity in universality is not found in any of the non-Catholic churches, whether Protestant or Oriental.

Look at the question of unity. The cardinal principle of the Reformation stood for the exclusion of any intermediary between the human conscience and God and for the supremacy of private judgment. But this principle is necessarily subversive of any authoritative and supreme power for teaching and ruling with divine sanction. Neither do the Episcopal churches come much nearer to the realization of this seal of the King's signet.

In fact among all the Protestant churches there is not on earth today a church which will dare to give a final and authoritative declaration with regard to the doctrine of Christ. Ask the highest powers in these churches, what must be the attitude of the faithful with regard to the forgiveness of

sins, the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the altar; and they do not dare to give an answer which will be binding upon all their members; nor do the members of these churches profess submission to such a definitive and obligatory judgment. Even with respect to what is as fundamental to Christianity as the divinity of Christ Jesus, there is no unmistakable pronouncement; and today many a minister is standing in Protestant Christian pulpits, who denies that Jesus Christ is very God.

And as for the universality or catholicity of these churches, it is all but useless to give any thought to that. They are at most regional or national; and even when they are spread over many lands, they are not diffused as one society which acknowledges a central authority, that speaks with binding force in doctrinal or disciplinary matters. Nor are the Oriental churches different from the Protestant churches in this. They cling to the first seven General Councils to the exclusion of any living authoritative voice. Hence they are practically without any authentic organ of doctrinal pronouncement,

and are therefore without the unity which must characterize the Church of Christ. And finally as for their diffusion, they are not the universal Church of the Master, since their existence outside of the Orient is so insignificant as to be quite negligible.

Turn to the Catholic Church, or, by way of description, the Roman Catholic Church, and note the difference. She has gleaming forth from her glorious figure these splendid marks stamped by the signet of the King. She traces the authority of her bishops back to the Apostolic Twelve: she points to the jurisdiction of her Popes in an unbroken line from Benedict XV back to Peter and to Christ the Son of God. There is no one in all the world who can deny that the material continuity of this succession is hers: and the legitimacy of this succession is proved by the presence in her communion of unity and catholicity.

Surely in her we find the profession of submission to the one authoritative voice of doctrinal teaching. For as they make their "Act of Faith," the faithful profess that they "believe what the holy Catholic Church

believes and teaches": through their union with their bishops under the headship of the Pope they are ready to hold with unfaltering adhesion of mind all that is proposed by this teaching authority, which according to the promise of Christ is forever infallible because of the abiding presence of the Spirit of truth. This very submission to one authority is made a matter of reproach to them by those who are not of their faith. But true to the mandate of the King they acknowledge the teaching power and the jurisdiction of the bishops and the Supreme Pontiff who speaks with the voice of Peter.

And universality or catholicity? Even by the confession of the world at large this is her peculiar prerogative. Seek throughout all the corners of this old earth of ours; and everywhere you will find this blessed Church doing the work of the Master, whether she worships in the magnificence of stately cathedrals or in the thatched chapels of the wilderness or beneath the open sky. She is not regional, not national, but is spread throughout the whole earth with such a diffusion and such a solidarity

of belief and government as go beyond material and human means of propagation. And all the while she remains the same visible society, subject to the same teaching and ruling authority that claims to hold from Christ Jesus. As Cyril of Jerusalem and Augustine challenged the world in the fourth century, so she can challenge all men in the twentieth with the truth, that, if one asks for the Catholic Church, he is directed not to the temples of any of the sects, but to the place of worship of the Church which has won for herself the right to that glorious title.

Thus the Catholic Church has this second mark, the juridical note of the King's signet: she alone is His true Church. And thus we are led to the same conclusion to which the consideration of Peter's primacy led us,—that the Roman Catholic Church and she alone is the one true Church of Christ, to which all must submit as they value the souls for which Christ died. Let those of us who have the inestimable blessing of the true faith, thank God for our undeserved privilege: let us cling to it as the

greatest gift of God's love to us: let us make honest efforts to be worthy of this blessed Church, and never cast a stain upon her matchless purity by the evil of our lives! And would to God, that those who are without her sacred pale, would hearken at last to the Mother, who is calling to them and holding out to them her arms that are not satisfied until they clasp within their embrace the children of her longing!

Oh, that they would listen to the words which well up from the depths of her heart! She and she alone is the one true Church of the Master, and she knows it. And hence her voice goes out to all the children of men with the cry of the Christ: "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."[1] She does not stand as a hard and heartless possessor of divine bounty; but as a loving Mother she yearns over her children and over those who are not yet her children, but must be if they would not turn their back upon the dear Christ. To the wanderers she speaks: and she does not say, "You are not of my fold:

[1] Matt. XI, 28.

God help you!" Never that; but with the Christ-like yearning of her soul, with the love of the King her Spouse she says, "Be of my fold: God bless you!" And may God hasten the day of the fulfillment of her loving prayer!

LECTURE VI

THE BRIDEGROOM AND HIS BRIDE

Résumé. Another proof according to Vatican Council. Special union between Christ and Church. Body of Christ. Members of Christ. Christ the head. His preeminence. His care for Church. Effects. Bride of Christ. More perfect union than in Old Law. Paul's teaching. Epistle to Ephesians. Mother of faithful. Church's benefits to soul: to body: to society. Relation between temporal and spiritual goods. Foundation of civilization: culture: arts: learning. Beneath the cross.

We are drawing towards the end of our considerations on the Church of Christ. Before making our final reflections let us briefly review what we have thus far had before our minds and hearts. Taking the New Testament writings as the foundation of our study, especially the gospel records, which are of the most unquestionable historical value and truly present what actually took place, we looked at the character of Jesus Christ the King. On His human side He was the paragon of mankind with

virtues winning in their sweet sacredness, overwhelming in their sublime magnificence. He was the legate or ambassador of God to men, with a mission from heaven vouched for by proofs which must win the assent of everyone who follows the dictates of prudence. And He was more than this: He was very God, and His words and acts have divine authority.

His great work was to accomplish the redemption of the human race, to make provision for the application of the fruits of that redemption and for the safeguard and propagation of His blessed revelation, when He Himself would have gone to the glory of His Father. The object of His labors and of His teaching was His Kingdom;—that Kingdom, which was the divine sway not merely over the separate and single souls of men, but in the united and exterior organization of the children of the Kingdom gathered together in a visible, collective whole. That Kingdom was to have its final and glorious consummation in the celestial blessedness of endless joy; but before it would bring God's loved ones to the happi-

ness of life eternal, it was first to have a period of strife and trial and labor in the conditions of this present life. All this we studied in "The King and His Kingdom."

Under the caption of "The Great Charter of the Kingdom" we looked more in detail at the work of the King, as He founded His Kingdom and gave it its powers. From amongst His disciples Christ chose twelve Apostles, whom He kept close to His sacred person and trained with special care and loving forbearance. He sent them upon temporary missions in the training-school of missionary effort. And finally He gave them their great commission to teach all nations with power from Himself and with the divine promise of unfailing success in the work for which they were sent. That commission includes the threefold power of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling the souls of men.

Theirs was the power of teaching with authority the truths entrusted to them by the Master: theirs, the right to demand of men assent of the mind in the absolute, un-

conditioned bowing down of the intellect before the revelation preached by them: theirs, the infallible voice, divinely preserved from the possibility of error in proclaiming the doctrines of the blessed Christ. Besides this they had the power of sanctifying the souls of men, not merely by the indirect influence of sacred doctrine and salutary laws, but directly by the religious rites instituted by Christ for the hallowing of the souls of His dear ones. And, thirdly, theirs was the power to rule the faithful in the realm of the soul with jurisdiction from the Master, who had sent them as the Father had sent Him. Such is the constitution of the Kingdom: such the powers of the true society, of which Christ is the founder.

"Some Prerogatives of the Kingdom" we next considered. The Church, which was thus established by the King as a true and perfect society, was not to come to an end with the death of the Apostles. The Twelve were to live on in their successors until time would be no more, unfailing from within, unconquerable from without. There is but one such Church of the Master, but one

Kingdom of the King, without peer or rival. And in its unicity and its perpetual continuance this Church of Christ is necessary for men, in such sort that he who knows its claims and sees their well-founded reasons and who refuses to follow the will of the Christ made known to him, cannot hope for salvation. The Church is necessary by reason of the mandate of the King: it is also necessary as being the ordinary means of God's general providence for man's salvation. This means can be supplied by the mysterious substitutes of God's special providence over individual souls, but only in the case of inculpable impossibility of recourse to this means fixed by mankind's Redeemer.

In studying "The Primate of the Kingdom" we entered into the very heart of Christ's constitution of His Church. Each of the Twelve did not possess in equal measure the powers conferred upon the Apostolic College: there was a primacy of jurisdiction in the hands of one of them. The supreme power over all the faithful and over all the other Apostles was possessed

by one,—and Peter was the primate. At Cæsarea Philippi Christ promised him this prerogative, and He conferred it upon him by the side of the Sea of Tiberias. This primacy of Peter was an essential part of the constitution of the Church. It was not to pass away with the mortal life of Peter, but was to live forever in the deathless life of the Church: Peter was forever to have successors in his sublime dignity as the visible head of Christ's Church. As a necessary consequence of this Peter must be somewhere on earth; and where he is, there and there alone is Christ's one true Church. Now, it is only in the Catholic Church that Peter can be found; and therefore from this single fact it is proved that the Catholic Church is the one true Church of the Master, the only Kingdom of the King.

But under still another aspect the same truth shines forth for those who have the will to see. In studying "The Seal of the King's Signet" we reflected upon the marks stamped upon His Church by the blessed Lord, and according to this standard we

measured the various rival claimants of the honor of being Christ's true Church. There were two sets of tests: the moral test of transcendent holiness, and the juridical test of Apostolic succession proved legitimate by catholic unity. These were the signs left by the King, as He sealed His Church with His royal signet. It is in the Catholic Church alone that these tests can be verified; and therefore again she and she alone is the one true Church of the Master. That is the point to which our investigations have led us.

We might indeed have begun where these considerations ended. Instead of beginning with the study of what Christ actually did, as opposed to what He might have done or has been said to have done by those who are manipulating history for their own ends, we might have started by looking at the Catholic Church as a great and undeniable fact in the world, without making any comparison between her and other churches. There she stands, as she has stood for ages, in the splendor of a holiness which goes beyond the power of faltering, stumbling, feeble

human nature; with an uninterrupted succession of authority which claims to go back, and does go back, to the Apostles, with subordination of all the faithful to one ruling power and to one authoritative body, which from the promise of the Master holds to infallible pronouncement about the teaching of Christ; with a universal diffusion, as the self-same society, through all nations and all civilizations; and all this in virtue of powers altogether spiritual and moral and in face of the countless shiftings of human societies and man's ineradicable natural longing for independence. Here is a fact: and this fact cannot be explained by human means: it calls for the extraordinary intervention of divine power; and that intervention stamps the Church with the mark of God's approbation.

Yes, even though we had no gospel record from which to study the actual foundation made by Christ, from the study of this *fact,* which is the Catholic Church in her magnificent history and her stupendous present, we could conclude with certainty that she is a divine work, a divine legate,

and the organ of divine truth; that from her we can learn everything about her own constitution, about her divine Founder, His person, His work, His doctrine, about the very gospel records themselves. This is, indeed, what is so clearly put before us in the words of the Vatican Council. The Council says: "Nay, the Church herself on account of her wonderful propagation, her surpassing holiness and inexhaustible fecundity in all good things, on account of her catholic unity and unbroken stability is a great and perpetual motive of credibility and an irrefragable testimony to her own divine mission." [1]

There, then, is Christ's Masterpiece: there is the Church of Christ the Lord, who is the revered Master and loved King of all mankind: there is the Roman Catholic Church, His own beloved. As a conclusion to our reflections about this hallowed Church let us dwell upon some thoughts about the close union between Christ and that Church of His. For the Church is the Body of Christ; she is the Bride of Christ; she is the Mother

[1] Denziger, 1794.

of the faithful ones who are the Master's own.

St. Paul bases a great part of his sublime dogmatic teaching upon the truth that the Church is the Mystic Body of Christ. Some see in this nothing more than a vague figurative expression signifying little. But though a figurative expression, it is not a mere figure of speech without a real foundation. No, just as it is a glorious reality that we are the sons of God, so too it is a magnificent fact that the Church is related to Christ as the body to the head. That the Church should be called a moral body need excite no wonder; for every society may be called that. And the Church by reason of its many members bound together by the organic constitution fixed by the Christ, by reason of the various functions of the members of the divinely constituted hierarchy, by reason of the unity resulting from the heaven-granted authority and from the mysterious operation of grace with faith and hope and charity, is in a most special way a moral body. St. Paul says: "For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have

not the same office: so we being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another."[1]

This consideration is full of very practical consequences, as the Apostle often pointed out. From this flows the mutual consideration which is due from each of the faithful to all the others; from this, the humility which does not exalt itself above its proper place; from this, the charity which holds together the sons and daughters of the Church; from this, the loyalty to one another, which should characterize those thus closely bound together.

But the Church is not only a body. It is the Body of Christ; and this sublime prerogative is something to give us much serious and loving thought. It is not merely that Christ is called the head of the Church. The chief superior of any perfect, even civic, society, be he king or emperor or president, may be called the head of the nation. But there is no king or emperor or president of whom we may say that the nation is his body. The President is the head of our na-

[1] Rom. XII, 4.

tion: but we are not his body; for the relation between him and us is only a moral one, and is not by any means a union which approaches to the physical influence of the head upon the members of the body. Yet it is precisely this latter relationship which St. Paul emphasizes, when there is question of Christ and His Church. "Now you are the body of Christ, and members of member": [1] "and He is before all and by Him all things consist: and He is the head of the body, the Church." [2] Nay, even our bodies of flesh belong to Christ: "Know you not, that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid." [3]

Truly, here is a marvel. The faithful preserve their physical and natural individuality; they live their own natural and human life as distinct personalities: and so too does our blessed Lord. But in the supernatural efforts of mind and heart and in the activities which count for heaven we and

[1] I. Cor. XII, 27.
[2] Col. I, 17.
[3] I. Cor. VI, 15.

Christ live the same life, though in widely different degrees; we are all animated by the same spirit of supernatural striving, the blessed Spirit of God, all vivified by the sacredness which flows forth from the Christ, "from whom the whole body being compacted and fitly joined together . . . maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in charity."[1] It is from the grace of Christ Jesus that the whole Church lives. He vivifies all those who are possessed even of the radical principle of life everlasting. He preserves all the powers of the Church: He administers all the life-giving sacraments: He verifies the truth of what He said long ago: "I am the vine, you the branches . . . without me you can do nothing."[2] This union with Christ, which makes us partake of the very divinity by our adoption into the sonship of God, is brought about and maintained chiefly through the sacraments, and especially by the sacrament of sacraments, the Holy Eucharist.

[1] Ephes. IV, 16.
[2] John XV, 5.

By the stupendous exaltation of the hypostatic union Christ is raised high above all that is earthly. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge";[1] He is "full of grace and truth":[2] to Him "is given all power in heaven and in earth";[3] Him did God raise "from the dead . . . setting Him on His right hand in the heavenly places: above principality and power and virtue and dominion . . . and hath subjected all things under His feet; and hath made Him head over all the Church, which is His body and the fulness of Him."[4] Yes, glorious He is; but from His position of sublime magnificence He yearns over His Church, which He vivifies and loves forever. "Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it . . . that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it might be holy and without blemish."[5]

[1] Col. II, 3.
[2] John I, 14.
[3] Matt. XXVIII, 18.
[4] Ephes. I, 20–23.
[5] Ephes. V, 25–27.

And this fostering care of the Christ is answered by the effect produced in the beloved Church so closely united to Him. The Church is the "fulness" of Christ: she is likened unto Him,—yes, unto similarity with Him in the failure of His Passion, but also unto a resemblance to Him in the glory of His Resurrection. More and more of mankind are always added to the children of His Church: more and more do the members partake of the holiness of the all-holy head: more and more the whole body "maketh increase . . . unto the edifying of itself in charity." And according to the all-holy and adorable will of God this is to go on through all the trials and conflicts of our days of warring, "until we all meet into the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the grace of the age of the fulness of Christ." [1]

Such is the union between Christ and the Church, His Mystic Body. She is called His Mystic Body to show that there is no question of physical or hypostatic union

[1] Ephes. IV, 13.

with Him; but to declare at the same time that the union is far beyond the nearness of symbolic relation. From the Christ to His Church there is actual physical supernatural influence through the divine grace which flows from Him. So close is the union that it is likened by Paul to the union between the Bridegroom and His Bride.

In the prophecies of Ezechiel [1] and Osee [2] and Isaias [3] God had spoken of His chosen people as His spouse. Alas! only too often that spouse was faithless to her Beloved; and finally she was cast off by the outraged Lord because of her hardened infidelity. In the New Dispensation the new people of God, the new Israel, was the Church, the rejuvenated perfection of humanity saved and hallowed by the Christ and bound to Him as His Spouse forever. Yes, in a higher and more complete sense than that in which Israel was ever the spouse of God, the Church is the Bride of the Bridegroom Christ.

St. Paul grows exultant as he looks upon

[1] c. XVI.
[2] c. II.
[3] c. LVII.

her beautiful features and reads the heroism of her inmost heart. Saved by the Christ, subject to Him in tenderest love and not in servile fear, beloved by Him unto the extremity of death, nourished and fostered by Him with His very body and blood, purified and sanctified through all days until the final hallowing shall render her forever spotless and glorious, united to Him in a union so close that they are but one,— such is the Bride of the Bridegroom. "They shall be two in one flesh" were words spoken of the closest of earthly relationships: and this conjugal union is but a faint image of the union between Christ and His Bride.[1] In fact, the same name is given to both: Christ and His Spouse form "the mystic Christ." "For," says St. Paul, "as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body: so also is the Christ,"[2] the mystic Christ, of whom the natural Christ is the head and the Church the body, the natural Christ is the

[1] Cf. Ephes. V, 21–33.
[2] I. Cor. XII, 12.

Bridegroom and the Church, the beloved Bride.

From this glory of the Spouse of Christ St. Paul draws many lessons of practical import. From this comes the sanctity of the Church, the beloved of the King, the Mother of all those who are brought forth unto God; for he who is not born of her is the child of a stranger. Yes, this is the background of St. Paul's wonderful epistle to the Ephesians, in which the ardent lover of Christ traces so vividly the grandeur and splendor of the Church.[1]

As Christ's mystic body the Church is but one, just as Christ the head is but one. She is one body, animated by one Spirit; tending to the one end of God's glory and the blessed happiness of the elect; governed by one authority; one in the common faith in God, one in the sacred baptism which gives her being and growth, one as the family of the common Father, one as the Kingdom swayed by the sceptre of the only King. As the temple of God, builded upon the foundation of the Apostles, the Church is apostolic:

[1] Cf. Prat, *La Théologie de Saint Paul*, I, 426 ff.

as the Kingdom of heaven on earth, which is to embrace all, she is universal. It is as Christ's Spouse that the Church is holy. The baptism which is the gateway to the Church and the door to life divine makes her children holy, so that the Apostle may call the faithful "saints"; and saints they all remain with fundamental holiness until the day of rejection of the reprobates. Sad it is, though true, that this holiness is stained in but too many of the Church's children; but among many of them there always remains the transcendent sanctity, which is the fruit of Christ's love for His Spouse. She herself is always the hallowed one of God, and at the end she shall be the Bride "holy and without blemish" for whom the Christ delivered Himself up.

And as she is the Bride of Christ, so is she the Mother of all the faithful. During the days of their wanderings and transgressions she yearns over those whom she has brought forth to God: she calls them to the Christ by whom they must live: she searches for them through all their revolts. With the tender affection of the Bride of the King

throbbing in her great heart; with the deep love-light of her undying yearning speaking through her soulful eyes and thrilling her touching voice; with the mother-hunger of her love stretching forth her longing arms to embrace the whole wide world,—she is and has been and will ever be "the mother of all the living."

What has she done for her children in the interests of their souls during the long ages that have passed since her betrothal with the King? What has she done for the world? Everything, everything. Look at the past, and as you look remember that the Church is the guardian of Christ's revelation and religion, the dispenser of His gifts of love to mankind. Hence, to review her work is to rehearse the accomplishments of Christianity. For Catholicism is Christianity undefiled; the Catholic Church is the Christian Church. Whatever of good has been effected by other Christian bodies, strayed away or cut away from her, has been brought about by what they had from her, even though the having of it meant theft or misfortune or blinded pride.

First, then, what has she done in behalf of the souls of her children? To give the answer means to go over the lives of those children of hers from the cradle to the grave, and to watch her work of sanctification through the sacraments of the King. She brought them forth to God in the "laver of water in the word of life."[1] She signed them with the might of the Holy Spirit unto the conflict for the faith. She raised them up after their weakness had yielded to the misery of human infirmity or to the fierce assaults of devilish attack. She fed them with the body and blood of the Incarnate Son of God. She provided for the continuance of the guardians of faith and morality, as she made "other Christs," who would have power over the real body of the Master, and would have sway over the mystical body of the King. She stood by their side as the shadows of life lengthened and the blackness of death closed in. She blessed the union of loving hearts with the consecrating benediction of heaven, that they might bring forth children to be trained for the higher dignity

[1] Ephes. V, 26.

of supernatural holiness and might fill heaven with the sons and daughters of God. From birth to death her mother-love has brooded over her children. Nay, even before their birth she, as no other has done, has guarded the life and rights of the unborn. And after death her care has not ceased; for she has followed her own out beyond the borders of time even to the judgment seat of God and has pleaded for them there. She has brought help and solace to them in their purgatorial pains: she has gone with them into the glory of life eternal and calls them her own forever and forever.

In the sorrows and injustices of life she has stood with them; and by the words of wisdom of her Bridegroom she has given high courage to souls bowed down before the awful mystery of evil in the world. She has told them that some of the hard things of life can be explained as due to the malice of men; and she has urged them to bide their time in patient love until the day when the just Judge will make all things right. But meanwhile she has taught them to look into the calm eyes of faith, to lean upon the

strong arm of hope, to rest upon the throbbing breast of charity; and that so they will have peace. Yet even whilst she solaced the oppressed, she has fought the oppressors, and has dinned into their ears the terrible truth of God's wrathful retribution against the spoliation of the poor and the grinding down of the weak and helpless, which are sins that cry to heaven for vengeance.

She has taught her children the true outlook on life. They have not, she has told them, an abiding home here, but are pilgrims to the realm of God their Father, whither Christ their Elder Brother has gone to prepare them a place in His Father's house, where there are many mansions. The soul's higher life is the great thing, to be preferred before all the riches of earth, before all the satisfaction of ease, before all the pomp of pride. And never had the grandeur of a human soul stood out in such wonderful splendor, as when she taught man's brotherhood to the Christ, the Son of the living God. That soul crimsoned all over with the blood of the dying God-Man,—surely there was nothing which a man would give in exchange

for his soul: surely it would profit a man nothing, if he gained the whole world, and lost his own soul for which Christ died.

Thus with her hallowed doctrine of the King, her Bridegroom, with the sacred sacraments of His overflowing love, and with her blessed sway over the souls of men whom she was to bring to God and keep there, she has done everything for the souls of her children. Yet she has not passed by their bodily needs: their material and temporal well-being she has not slighted.

For these too she has provided and has blessed the whole world, as she blessed her own. Glance over the records of history and see the truth of this statement. Who founded and maintained hospitals for the care of the sick and the outcast? The Church. Who led in the struggle against the unholy traffic in human beings, dragged into slavery and ground down to the degradation of things? The Church. Who gave up treasures and the comforts of home and country, yes, and life itself, to free captives from the misery of a state that was an earthly hell? The Church through her sons. Who opened,

not merely houses, but homes for the poor? Who provided a peaceful and loving shelter for leper outcasts? Who sent into these havens of living death the noblest of her sons and daughters? The Church. There has not been a form of human suffering of body or soul, which the Church has not sought to relieve and to which she has not brought a large measure of alleviation through all the ages of her loving labors.

And besides all this, or, if you will, through all this, she has been at the back of all the civilization and culture which this world of ours now possesses; she has furthered the temporal well-being of the human race. Let it be noted right here and with extreme emphasis that the material welfare of the world is not the thing for which the Church was instituted by the blessed Master. She was not founded for that; although, to listen to many religious workers of today, one would think that the chief, if not the only, work of the Church of Christ was meant to be the material uplifting of mankind. She was sent forth into the world to save the world and to bring it to God: she

was founded to safeguard the revelation and religion of Christ the King and to hand it on unsullied to the end. Directly and immediately she has nothing to do with the exclusively temporal prosperity of the human race: her end is higher and more sublime; for it looks to the spiritual and eternal interests of her children. Yet because of the deep charity which throbs forever in her motherly heart she is not indifferent to their material welfare; and in the prosecution of her spiritual end she has done an enormous work for the civilization and culture of the world. In fact, all the civilization and culture that we have owes much, if not all, of its existence to her.

Civilization means an organized social and civic code and the stability of social relations between men, based upon the fundamental virtues of justice and honesty and truth. If the world but lives up to the requirements of these virtues, it is a civilized world. Nothing remains to be done but to formulate a public code in accordance with these principles, which have become facts,—and the whole work is ended. Can these virtues ex-

ist without the Church and the Church's teachings and the Church's means of grace? It would be rash to deny the possibility. But as a matter of concrete fact, where is the force that did inculcate these root-virtues and did bring them down into the consciences of savage rioters? It was the Catholic Church.

Pagan Rome's civilization was gone. It had died of the poison of slavery and licentiousness, and had disappeared before the invasion of the untamed children of the North. These barbarians had much of human nature still unspoiled; but for all that they were crude and wild savages. Yet it was the Church, and the Church alone who took them, and with much toil and more suffering through long and weary years molded them into her children, who held her sacred faith and clung to her motherly love. Many of them became great saints, though others remained at heart the untamed brutes that they had been. But the Church was undying and could wait with a patience like the patience of God. And she did wait; and she did labor, until she forced the great moral

standards of justice and honesty and truth down into the depths of savage consciousness. She made these standards at least the principles of public life, no matter how much they were violated in the practical lives of many.

And so, nations were born. The foundations of Christian civilization were laid, with the rights of the weak safeguarded against the encroachments of the strong. Only the perfection of the work was left to be accomplished. "Thus," it has been well said, "savage humanity was tamed, uncivilized humanity was civilized, uncultured humanity was cultured, and the Ages of Faith, called dark by those whose own minds are in darkness, were really the ages of light and progress and the triumphant witness of the civilizing power of the Catholic Church. The many defects which still survived were not a sign of failure, but only a sign that the whole of an enormously difficult task had not yet been accomplished." [1]

The Church not only brought about civilization: she developed culture. She aroused

[1] Ernest Hull, S. J., in *Catholic Mind*, Jan. 22, 1916.

the genius of the masters of architecture; and the love for her Spouse flamed up into the throbbing sermons and poems in stone, which have made the cathedrals of Catholic days the marvels of the world and the models of succeeding ages. In their beauty and grandeur they were only the settings for the jewel of the Eucharistic God abiding with the children brought forth to Him by His Bride. The Church gave the ideals which flashed forth in gleams of beauty beneath the pen of poets like Dante, the chisel of sculptors like Michael Angelo, and the brush of painters like Raphael. She preserved the learning of olden days and fostered the intellectual pursuits of younger generations, and she filled the face of the earth with schools and universities.

All this she did out of her motherly love for her children; but she did it with her glowing eyes always fixed upon her everlasting home, whither the King had gone and whither she must lead her own. To bring them home,—this was the work near to her heart of hearts; this, the "one thing necessary." All else was to be attended to only

in so far as it was not against this great object of her being, and in so far as it might even help to the glory of her Spouse. But, this object being attained, her charity was too big to be contained even within her great soul, and it overflowed upon the race of men with countless blessings even for their temporal weal.

The realization of what the Church of Christ has done for us and for all men should be more than enough to wake within us deep sentiments of reverence and grateful love for her. Yes, we should venerate her and hold her dear for what she has done; but we should not stop there. She has done what she has done, because she is what she is; and that sublime excellence of hers should draw to her our admiration and our deepest affection. Unless we are blind or are groping in the blackness of ignorance, excusable though it may be, we cannot love God without loving her, because of her close union with Christ the Son of God. She is the superb masterpiece of His love for men. She is the continuation of His work,—I had almost said, she is the incarnation of the Incarnate

Word. She is His mystic body, vivified forever by Him who is her head. She is His Spouse, loved with an affection which could find an abiding place nowhere else than in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

That riven Heart tells the magnitude of the love of the Bridegroom for His Bride, who as the Mother of all the faithful was to bring unspeakable blessings of soul and body to her children and to all mankind. She holds within her heart that love for men which urged the Victim of the world to love His own unto the end: she bears within her bosom the treasures of the precious blood of the Redeemer, shed on the shameful cross: she guards the channels of divine grace, which carry to men the streams of the superabundant atonement of the Christ.

And the cost of it all, and the symbol of it all, and the proof of it all is shown forth on Calvary. During the solemn sadness of Holy Week we are standing with Mother Church on the murky hillside of Calvary and looking up at the mangled figure on the cross. Oh, that we could see with her blessed eyes, with her living faith, with her thrilling

hope, with her pulsing charity! That body torn with the lash and showing disfigured wounds which gape like quivering mouths: that head crowned with the tearing thorns: that face, once so fair, but now swollen with the blows of ruffians, befouled with the spittle of human fiends, blackened with the clotted blood which has flowed down in trickling streams: those hands and feet dug with the nails and fixed to the hard wood: and that gashed breast, wide-opened by the soldier's spear deep down into the heart which throbs no more with quickening love for men, since it is stilled in death,—all these speak of the love of the Bridegroom for His Bride. For her He paid this price: Christ loved His Church and delivered Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her and might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish.

Oh, blessed Mother, sacred with the holiness of the martyred Christ, may we by the grace of the world's Redeemer be true to Him by being true to you through all the days of our earthly warfare! And may all

the sons and daughters of men, who, because they do not know you, do not recognize your surpassing loveliness and your undying love, be brought to hear your yearning call to come to you! May they hearken to your invitation, and with childlike confidence and love throw themselves within your motherly arms! May God reign through Christ the King! May Christ the King rule through you, the Queen and Mother! And thus may the whole great family of God be bound together here in the bonds of united faith and holiness and loving subjection to the Most High, and hereafter in bliss eternal!

For God this means honor and glory: for the blessed Church, the fulfillment of the King's trust of love: for us, the coming safe at last to the glorious and undying Kingdom of Christ in its heavenly joys forever and forever.

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